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LIFE IN RUSSIA:

OR, THE

DISCIPLINE OF DESPOTISM.

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"THE NOTE-BOOK OF A NATURALIST."

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PREFACE.

It is a singular fact, that in the middle of the nineteenth century, there is less known of Russia than of any other country,—most certainly, than of any other country in Europe,—and yet more is said of it, more obloquy is heaped upon it, and more unjust statements made concerning it than it deserves, with all its faults. Rumours take the place of facts, and in the estimation of the world, Russia is considered as an unapproachable limit, a kind of barrier to the advances of civilised Europe.

Its stormy seas and cheerless climate deterred even the enterprise of commercial adventure, till within the last two hundred years; and a similar prestige as regards private intercourse, seems now to affect the spirit of individual curiosity and observation.

The author of the following pages has not the vanity to believe that his few slight sketches will supply all that is wanting of information on the

subject of Russia, nor that the mere outline of facts and description of incidental scenes, conveyed in a familiar correspondence, will represent a perfect picture of the country; but still he hopes that what he has written may assist in giving a tolerable idea of the country and its inhabitants, and in forming just opinions of the Imperial system of government.

London, 1848.

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LIFE IN RUSSIA.

LETTER I.

Impressions on visiting a Foreign Country.— Custine and Schnitzler.— Remarks on the Emperor Paul's Death.— Effects of Espionage and of National Jealousy.— Duties of a Traveller.— Character of the Russians.— Voyage to Hamburg.— Dutch Fishing Boat becalmed.— Discomforts of an English Steam Boat.— Road from Hamburg to Lubeck.— Lubeck.— Voyage up the Baltic.— Exchange of Steam Boats.— Violent Tornado.— Arrival at St. Petersburg.— Prohibition to land.— Absence of Passport.— Passengers confined under Guard.— Bribery and Escape.— Scene with Russian Officer.— Feelings of Constraint experienced by Travellers in Russia.— Examination by the secret Police.

Our first impressions on visiting a foreign country are generally vague and unsettled; an indefinable kind of excitement, in fact, prevents our seeing things in their true light, and with that distinctness which custom alone can produce. Habit, perhaps, blunts the keenness of our observation, and familiarity may blind us to many singularities of manners and customs; yet if less be told in consequence, that little is at all events divested of exaggeration, and of all false tone and colouring.

After several visits to the north, therefore, I ought to be in a position to give a correct idea of the country and its inhabitants, without treading in the steps of my predecessors, whose descriptions we have read together, or running the risk of repetition.

Le Marquis de Custine is, perhaps, the only author who has treated of Russia *en vrai philosophe;* and his work, although tinged with too much of the *amour propre* peculiar to his nation, (to say nothing of a foolish fear for his personal safety, which possessed him,) may be pronounced the most able critique of the Russian system that has appeared. Schnitzler is the only other writer who can be quoted as an authority; and the ample opportunities he enjoyed, enabled him to furnish as perfect a statistical history as the restrictive operation of the most vigilant censorship would allow. A remarkable instance of the power of suppressing the details of notorious events which the Russian Government exercises upon occasion, is afforded by the fact, that in an affair so comparatively recent as the assassination of the Emperor Paul, and even while some of the chief actors in the scene still survive, so many versions of the deed should be afloat; and that history (that is, Russian history) does not breathe a syllable on the subject, beyond stating with jesuitical refinement, that he "ceased to live."

The human mind in Russia may be compared

to a filtering funnel, in the broad capacity of which, natural ideas and opinions find ample space, but are so strained off and frittered away in passing through the narrow aperture, that the original ingredients are not even recognisable. From the reserve habitually inculcated by despotism, and the discipline to which the tongue has been brought by the terrors of a most subtle and ubiquitous system of espionage, it is impossible for the mere transient visitor to arrive at just conclusions or to ascertain real facts: the face of society, trained and disciplined, is like the mirror, which, reflecting only the external aspects of things, must be divested of its opaque lining if we wish to extend our vision.

The difference in manners and customs is obvious to the idle tourist who travels only for the excitement of change; but as these tend materially to form the character of the people, they are not to be characterised truly according to first impressions. Hence the difficulty of writing at all about Russia; and hence the many false deductions that have been drawn from appearances by those who have ventured on this theme.

The first duty of a traveller is, I conceive, to gain some insight into the character and habits of the people he is about to visit, by making himself master of the best writers on the subject: not to depend entirely upon them, as if they were merely showmen at an exhibition, nor to allow his

opinions to be formed by others, as is the case with pseudo-politicians in reading the leading article of a newspaper; but to prepare himself, in some measure, against the effects of surprise, and those errors of judgment which ensue from the novelty of position and circumstances. Habit has neutralised these effects in me; and the doubt only remains whether I have not become so familiarised with the change of character, usages, and manners, as to cease to observe those differences which no longer startle. Indeed, I could so readily naturalise myself in Russia, that I am more likely to fall into the other extreme, and describe those things as natural and habitual which, in fact, form the very contrasts that distinguish one nation from another.

As regards the character of the Russians, I have read much, and observed more, and incline to the belief that Schnitzler's account of them is just and correct: at all events, it tallies so exactly with my own impressions, that I shall use his words in describing it.

"The Russian nation has preserved to a great extent the qualities and defects of a people not yet civilised; but it by no means deserves to be described as a race of slaves, bowed down by the rod, and incapable of generous feelings.

"The Russian is good, obliging, officious, and remarkably hospitable: his natural politeness, though flowing from the immense distance be-

tween him and the aristocracy, and the humility which that rank imposes on him, gives him a certain style, which sits well upon him: he is gay, active, jolly, and even gaillard, and his physiognomy betokens intelligence. He is daring even to rashness, and passive to the last degree. If he possesses but little perseverance, still his firmness in moments of need is equal to any trial. Insensible to fear, he is rarely embarrassed: quick at repartee, and with abundant common sense, his fertile genius never leaves him at a loss for resources; and with a thousand expedients at his command, his dexterity in employing them is astonishing. Obedient to the laws of his country, however oppressive they may be, he is faithful to his sovereign and devoted to his country, which he is proud of, and, in his ignorance, considers superior to all others on the globe. Religious and exact in his devotions, and in the duties prescribed by the church, he is liberal in his gifts to the poor, and honours the memory of the dead with the most scrupulous regard. He addresses his seigneur without fear or intimidation, and even with a degree of boldness. He is eloquent, and his language, metaphorical and winning, approaches even to the poetical, while his familiar allocutions of "little father," "charming little nurse," *molitvennaïa Karmilitsa*, breathe the kindest feeling. On the other hand, it must be confessed that his heart conceals the most violent

passions, which, fearful when they burst forth, destroy every feature of that goodness of heart which is so characteristic of the Russian. His natural politeness and superiority of manner yield to a brutality which betrays itself by the most coarse and vulgar language: in this paroxysm of rage the barbarian stands confessed in full force. His oaths excel in coarseness those of other nations, and, fruitful in invective, each one more disgusting than the last, he vomits them forth with the more intensity that violence or blows are seldom had recourse to. With his face flushed, and his gesticulation animated by a brutal energy, no consideration can stop the fearful and entire display of the uncivilised savage.

"Nevertheless his apparent pride humbles itself at the least prospect of profit: he kisses the skirts of the coat, or the arms of those he supplicates; he touches the earth with his hands as a proof of his submission, and will not hesitate to prosternate himself at the feet of those who have any authority over him. The love of gain is his god; his activity is boundless, and to satisfy it at the least possible cost, he will sacrifice his natural pride, his good faith, and even his morality, if his ignorance permits him to know the meaning of the word." Madame de Staël, in her work, "Dix Années d'Exil," says with great truth, that theft is as much to be looked for as hospitality: "Ils vous donnent comme ils vous

prennent, selon que la ruse ou la generosité parle à leur imagination." They are thus the more dangerous, because, inexhaustible in artifice, they conceal their cunning under the mask of honesty and good humour, which easily deceives. In a word, the character of the Russians is that of a people energetic and gifted by nature, but on whom instruction has not yet exercised her sway, and to whom an enlightened philosophy has not yet given an elevated feeling. It is easy to foresee the position they will one day hold, for they possess all the qualities necessary to make a great people, with the exception, perhaps, of that depth of feeling, to which a mind too devoted to traffic, and of too speculative a turn, can seldom attain.

But here I am in "the bowels of the land," and writing you a long essay on the people before I tell you how I got here. I shall therefore resume the subject in a future letter.

Neptune was propitious, and we crossed the North Sea in an uninterrupted calm, making the passage to Hamburg in fifty-four hours. A Dutch fishing smack lay becalmed direct in our course, broiling under an intense heat, and unable to display a signal from the perfect stillness of the air. The shouting of the crew for assistance induced our skipper to slacken his speed and to send a boat to board them. It turned out that they had been thus becalmed for the two days previous, and had expended all their water and bread.

A supply was of course despatched to them, and they in return loaded us with turbots and dorees, which during the remainder of the voyage formed an epicurean treat for dinner and breakfast. The perfection in these fish consists in boiling them in sea water.

There is a coarseness at the tables of English steamboats which is extremely disagreeable: it partakes too much of the mode of living habitual to the captain, who furnishes the table, and who believes that massive joints and plenty of them are the perfection of good taste. The representation of an eighteenpenny ordinary is misplaced on board ship, where delicacy and cleanliness alone should be found. In foreign steamboats, it is perfectly possible to forget for the moment that you are not seated at a well-appointed table d'hôte.

The Baltic steamers leave Lubeck, or rather Travemunde, on every Saturday afternoon precisely at three o'clock; there is consequently but just sufficient time before you to traverse the distance between that place and Hamburg, and, till lately, the road was so disgracefully bad that even that was barely possible. A new and shorter road has, however, been constructed, but too late to benefit the now ruined fortunes of Lubeck, for, in order to divert the trade from the Elbe to his own ports, the King of Denmark has laid down a railroad from Altona to Kiel. The bed of the

Trave is filling up, the trade of the city is declining, and thus "Troja fuit" would be a more becoming motto over its gates than the bombastic one which still exists, as if in mockery. History, however, will record the name of Lubeck for the valiant defence of its citizens against the attack of the French, and for the last stand made there by Blucher after his masterly retreat in 1806.

Lubeck is a striking instance of the effect of social and elemental revolutions on local prosperity. She was undoubtedly at one period the queen of the Baltic—the Venice of the north—and the aisles of the Marie Kirche chronicle her sway on the tablets, or rather monuments, erected to the memory of her departed admirals. These memorials are piled high against the pillars in all the pride of carved emblazonry, surrounding mostly a portrait of the hero himself, and narrating a fulsome catalogue of deeds, important only in the estimation of the man who performed them. One, however, is remarkably significant, and strangely imagined. At its base—as if having partially clambered up the pillar, on part of which it rests—a skeleton, with outstretched arm, and holding a sponge, is in the act of blotting out the recorded inscription. I forget the date, but a few short years have already as much erased the name from the page of history as if the allegory itself had been fulfilled.

In a side chapel is the celebrated picture of the

Dance of Death, by Albrecht Dürer. It is the singularity of the idea rather than the execution which stamps it as a work of genius: but though it occupies three sides of the chapel, yet, being in a bad light, and obscured with dirt, it loses its real importance.

The steeples of all the churches—and they are mostly lofty, pointed, slated, twin structures—lean at an angle of many feet: I think in one instance of eight, and another of thirteen. Whether this was caused by a sinking of the soil, or whether they were originally built at an inclination, like the falling tower of Pisa, I know not. Lubeck is the abode of dulness; the cause of which I have already explained. In a few years it will resemble those ancient sea-ports, since become inland towns, which we have in England, particularly on the coast of Kent.

Favoured by the same serenity of weather, we made a quick run up the Baltic, and reached Cronstadt in eighty-four hours; and not one hour too soon. I have been on the Baltic when its surface was so glassy smooth that the ripple caused by the settling of a bird on its surface could be seen; I have been on it in snow and frost, in fog and in storm; but I never had witnessed such a tornado as that which swept over us shortly after we anchored. In an instant the waves were lashed into fury, and the waters heaved with the most violent commotion; sails

were rent and spars snapped in all directions; several little Swedish craft were sunk, and the whole scene was one of disaster and desolation.

The Baltic steamers are large; and, being of too heavy a draught to pass over the bar at the entrance of the Neva, smaller vessels are employed to convey the passengers to St. Petersburg. The operation of transhipment, by means of planks laid across from one vessel to the other, had begun before the hurricane was at its height, but the danger became so great that the smaller vessel was forced to cast off with half the passengers, and to shift for itself. When fairly off, we began to look round to see that our luggage was right, and that the police officer was on board with our passports, but the latter had been left behind. The situation was not pleasant in that respect; but we hoped that, under the circumstances of the case, some indulgence would be shown to us. However, we were doomed to be disappointed. Our new skipper, with his wretched crew of two hands, was frightened, and wished to anchor; but that we strenuously resisted, and compelled him to proceed. Our steam power was not sufficient to get the vessel about, and, in the helplessness of the case, some of us got a foresail upon her and brought her round. After eight hours delay, during which time we were buffeting against the tempest, we arrived, and expected to be allowed to land. But no: Tantalus-like, we

were refused the relief that seemed within our reach. Our fate was at length decided: having no passports, we were marched off under a guard of soldiers, and locked up in a large comfortless warehouse. It was ten o'clock, A.M., and we had not broken our fast; and we were denied any refreshment, and even the means of communicating with our friends: resistance, therefore, was loudly talked of as time grew on. I declined joining in the scheme, knowing, from past experience, the means of effecting a quiet escape, which I accomplished at 6 P.M., after eight hours confinement. A silver rouble placed in my snuff-box was too tempting a pinch to the sergeant of the guard to be refused, and I was at liberty in a moment. At ten o'clock at night the passports arrived, and I went to claim mine, but the same difficulty was offered to my entrance as there had been before to my exit. The officer in command, seeing me, at once accosted me, "Monsieur, où avez vous été? Je ne vous ai pas trouvé tantôt." "Moi! nullepart," replied I, laughing. "Mais, badinage apart, il faut me le dire, n'est ce pas vous vous êtes échappé? Comment l'avez vous fait, on vous a aidé?" "Pour ça je suis franc maçon, et garde bien mon secret; mais je vous dit en confiance que je me suis sauvé par mes talents et par mes talons." "Très-bien! mais vous avez donné un rouble d'argent au serjeant là bas." "Comment savez vous cela?" "Oh!

je le sais bien moi," replied he, tapping his pocket at the same time. I took the trouble to inquire, and found that, on missing me, he had taxed the sergeant with having received a bribe, and had coolly transferred the douceur to his own pocket.

The difficulties, the obstructions, the multiplication of forms and ceremonies, which a traveller has to encounter on entering the Russian dominions, are beyond description from their variety, and ridiculous from their minuteness; they are serviceable, however, in preparing the traveller for the great change he has to experience. A feeling of indefinable constraint, a kind of mental enthralment, and an unpleasant sensation of personal insecurity, oppress one's energies. The spirit of discipline and subjugation spreads like an infection; and, distressed at this first experience of a new feeling, we discover, on attempting to analyse it, that our individual responsibility and voluntary agency has ceased, and that our condition has become altogether passive and dependent. Previous voyages have in no respect changed or hardened me, and I resume the chains with all the disgust of a novice.

On presenting myself at the head quarters of the secret police, the day after my arrival, to claim as usual an order for my ticket of residence: that is, a permission to reside: I was recognised, or else notice had been given by the police who examined us at Cronstadt, that I was no new

traveller, and accordingly I was subjected to a strict examination; the object of my journey was peremptorily demanded of me, and I gave the usual answer, "un voyage d'agrément." "But, sir, it is not usual for people to return to this country several times on a voyage d'agrément: have the kindness to await my return." To hear was to obey: I had no choice left, even had I wished, or had reason to refuse. Summoned presently, I followed my conductor to another apartment, where I was introduced to an officer of rank, in uniform, and with a full complement of stars and orders on his breast. He began: "It is useless for me to tell you that the reason you have assigned for returning to Russia is inadmissible; and it is my duty to inquire into the real motive, since we cannot quite believe in the flattering statement you made just now, as to your journey being repeated solely for the attractions you may find here." "With your Excellency I can have no scruples; but you must be aware that it is not always agreeable to be too explicit with subordinates." He bowed, and I continued: "the fact is, your Excellency, that I came here by the special desire of Count —— on the affair of ——, and am the bearer of this letter to him; which, I trust, is a satisfactory voucher for my person and the object of my journey." "I have heard of this before, but did not know that in you I should have the honour of meeting that gentle-

man. I am sorry you should have been troubled: pray accept my excuses."

This scene will convey to you, more than anything I can add, the Argus-eyed jealousy of the police, and the subjection which it imposes on every one.

I shall doubtless have occasion to give you other examples during my stay here.

LETTER II.

Summer Nights in Russia. — Sleeping Villagers. — First Aspect of St. Petersburg. — Tyranny and Extortion. — Law of the Censorship. — Efficacy of a Bribe. — Demoralising Effects of Despotism. — Ruling Principle of the Russians. — Prominent Features of St. Petersburg. — Streets and Squares. — Houses and Furniture. — The Winter Palace. — Singular Custom in Royal Residences. — The Czarovitch and Serfdom. — The Admiralty Square. — Monolith of the Emperor Alexander. — Statue of Peter the Great. — Sailor's Frolic. — Hotels and Boarding Houses. — Self-importance of emancipated Serfs.

I KNOW of no sensation more extraordinary and striking than that which affects the traveller, as he approaches the north in the summer solstice; particularly when for the first time he finds himself no longer in a country

> "Where light and darkness in perpetual round
> Lodge and dislodge by turns."

The French traveller Custine has most admirably described this feeling, "Hier est à peine fini, demain commence:" this is literally true, for there is nothing to mark the passage of time. The necessary observance of the conventionalities of life and society reminds us of particular periods, but the association of ideas which attended those

periods no longer exists: the mind, like an ill regulated time-piece, has no accuracy in its movements. Night brings no darkness in its train; a subdued light as compared to the garish day, is the only emblem of the approach and existence of to-morrow.

To rise early on a summer's morning in more southern latitudes, and to find all nature still in repose, appears reasonable, because the season of rest has not expired; but to wander abroad at midnight (if such an expression can be used) and to find all still as death both in town and country, save the occasional patrole of mounted Cossacks, when nature does not slumber, weighs down the mind with the sense of a preternatural state. The exhilarating sensation which one has experienced in England and other European countries, from the freshness and newness of early morning, when

> "All nature's children feel the matin spring
> Of life reviving, with reviving day,"

are missed here; and in their place a wearisome monotony, the effect of a hard, dry, fixed atmosphere, pervades every thing. The new day — the to-morrow — seems as if it had sat up all night; and all nature, animate and inanimate, partakes of its influence. As the closing of the eyes in sleep refreshes and invigorates the body, the material substance of our nature requiring this relaxation so wonderfully and mercifully con-

trived, so likewise the immaterial spirit, the mind, has an equal necessity for a season of calmness and repose, when, in the absence of the exciting and bustling activity which absorbs its energies by day, it can, under the shades of night, revert within itself, reflecting on the past and contemplating the future. Imagination is more lively when undisturbed by the impressions on the external senses, and the solemnity of darkness, with its train of uncertainty and shadowy fears, stamps its creations with the vivid forms and colours of reality. The soothing influences of this period can only be justly appreciated by those who have experienced the contrast.

Often in travelling into the interior of Russia I have passed through villages at one and two o'clock of the morning, and seen long lines of sleeping forms, stretched on the ground along the fronts of their houses; the inmates having been driven out by the extreme heat and closeness of their dwellings, and (as scandal has it) to avoid also the innumerable swarms of bugs with which they are infested. Undisturbed by the rumbling of the vehicle, and even by the process of changing horses, they are fit emblems of the season — sleep without repose, night without darkness. To such as remain within, the mode of taking rest is equally unrefreshing: I have passed from room to room, and found the leathern sofas, and even the tables, occupied by sleepers, divested of none of

their clothing and wearing their daily garb. If Nature brings no refreshing change, why should they be at variance with her?

The first appearance of St. Petersburg is more imposing than agreeable: its gilded domes and spires are visible at a considerable distance, glittering under the sun's rays, but the city itself is not discernible till the vessel approaches the quay. The absence of all bustle and population, and the cold, stately appearance of the houses, add to the chill which the inquisition of the police, and the useless forms of the custom-house authorities, have already produced. The uncomfortable reflection obtrudes itself that power is law, without appeal or remedy, excepting under the influence of gold. Docility and compliance are of little use where the governing principle is tyranny and extortion. Imaginary difficulties are created for the sole purpose of exacting a douceur, which, when duly administered, is equally available in evading the most stringent regulations. The law of the censorship is very severe, and works of certain descriptions are strictly prohibited; among which histories of revolutions stand first. The case of books I took with me contained several of that character, and I was naturally anxious not to be deprived of them: they might have been crammed with treason, and I should have had nothing to fear; for a ten rouble note, applied in the right quarter, brought the box to my door.

without a nail having been disturbed. The ignorance in this department must be very gross, if it be true, as I have been told, that a book professing to treat on the *revolutions* of the heavenly bodies, was detained as being of a dangerous tendency.

To restrict the intellect by confining the ideas may aid despotism in its work, but it can never elevate a people to cope with other nations, nor raise its standard of civilisation. The Russians are naturally clever and apt, and capable of the highest attainments; but what authority has enjoined, habit has reconciled them to: literature, therefore, is not one of their resources; and the consequence is, that dissipation and rooted idleness, with laxity of morals, reign supreme. Conversation is naturally limited, from the prohibition of certain subjects, or the fear of introducing them; even if the ignorance, in which all are kept, of the leading events of the day, were removed: thus there is no common ground on which all may meet; and it is not to be wondered at that the mind, ever active in some pursuit or other, should fly to the frivolities of life for its amusement. If the preservation of power can only be maintained on these principles, the responsibility of him who holds it is great indeed.

The leading principles of action among the Russians may be divided into two heads; namely, fear towards superiors, and tyranny to inferiors. The conduct of the superior influences the inferior:

for in exactly in proportion to the degree of power exercised by the one, is the tyranny with which its behests are transmitted down the various grades of subordinates to the other; increasing in asperity at every step, till it ends with the poor mujik *, even in blows.

Vastness and space are the most prominent features in St. Petersburg: the scale on which the buildings are planned, the extreme width of the streets, and the prodigious extent occupied by the squares and public places, weary and bewilder the eye. Elegance and harmony are not obtained, because proportions are not kept; for, however colossal the buildings, the effect is marred, either by distance or by the uncircumscribed space around them. The streets are undeviatingly straight, intersecting each other at right angles; and the three main thoroughfares spread out fan-like from one common centre, of which the Admiralty steeple is the point.

Most of the houses are built in quadrangles, having a large court-yard in the centre, which is used for stabling and for housing the enormous piles of wood laid in for winter fuel. They have common-stairs like those in Edinburgh, or the inns of court in London, and each floor often contains many separate tenements. They are generally of vast size, of three or four stories high, and accommodate an incredible number of families: one

* Peasant.

house, for instance, in the Nefskoi Prospeckt, where I had to deliver a letter, was occupied by 170 different sets of tenants, and, as there was no register of their names, I found it impossible to execute my commission. The ground-floor facing the street, even in the houses of the highest nobility, is used for shops: but the uniformity of the building is not disturbed by this arrangement; for the windows are not altered to form what are called shop-fronts in England. Indeed, any deviation from the usual form would be impossible, as there would be no means of putting in the double sashes or frames, which are indispensable preservatives against the severity of the cold in winter.

The furniture, paper, and other hangings in the houses are flashy but not substantial, and many little articles which are seen in the meanest lodgings in England, such as window-blinds, bed-curtains, wash-hand stands, &c., are not to be found; but there are mirrors, sofas, lustres, French engravings, and other ornamental things, of ten times the value of those essentials that are wanting. This is typical of the state of things throughout the country; which seeks, by imposing on the eye by external effects, to blind the judgment to the moral and physical characteristics of things beneath the surface. The principle of government and the regulations of society know no other object: and to descend to realities, the glittering and noble-looking edifices, unsubstantial mockeries of Italian

splendour rising from an arctic morass, are but so many incrustations of plaster, crumbling under the rigours of winter, and requiring to be renewed and restored again, to cheat the eye with a mask of magnificence.

The Winter Palace is the most prominent architectural feature of the capital, and excites admiration in the highest degree: from every point of view this imposing structure attracts the attention above all other objects. Particularly happy in its situation, it stands in a vast open space in the centre of the city; the river, the bridges, the columns, the statues and the shipping, instead of disturbing the main architectural effect, seem to form parts and concomitants of a vast whole. It is in the Louis XIV. style, and of such vast dimensions, that it is said to be capable of lodging three thousand souls. Certainly it is most densely inhabited, as you may imagine from the fact that, since the destruction of the former palace by fire, a corps of three hundred firemen form part of the heterogeneous assemblage within its walls. On one side it is bounded by the river, from which it is protected by a broad and massive granite quay, the citadel or fortress facing it on the opposite side of the stream; on another it is connected by a covered bridge with the Hermitage, formerly the favourite residence of the Empress Catherine II., but now a picture gallery; and the other two sides face the great Admiralty square. This vast pile

rose like the palace of Aladdin, in comparison with the time usually found necessary for the erection of buildings of such magnitude, — it rose as it were the emanation of a night. It was built upon the ashes of a former edifice that had been burned down, and it was constructed and inhabited in the brief space of two years: a short time under any circumstances, but inconceivably so when the limited duration of the season available for building in Russia is taken into consideration. It is in such efforts as this that the great power which the Emperor has over his people, and the extraordinary vigour he can infuse into their proceedings, become manifest. Difficulties and impossibilities seem to be almost indispensable stimulants to him.

The Winter Palace contains several noble halls; among which, that called St. George's, in which the chapters of the different orders are held, is remarkable for its chaste and strictly classical style; but whether from some defect in construction, or from a settlement of the walls, the roof fell in a short time since, and destroyed it entirely: it has, however, been reconstructed. The interior of the palace generally is as sumptuous as can be desired to contribute to the pomp and splendour of a monarch; it is adorned with all that European luxury and Eastern magnificence can devise: costly malachite, porphyry and the most exquisite marbles, golden ornaments, immense mirrors, and richly inlaid parquets, dazzle the sight, which is

bewildered by the number and vastness of the saloons.

Whether it be a superstition, or respect for the memory of the illustrious dead, that dooms luxurious splendours to a silence and solitude exceeded only by that of the tomb, I know not; though no similar observance obtains in the grades of society beneath the monarch: but it is a custom, observed to the present day, that neither the room occupied by the deceased sovereign, nor the palace itself, shall in future be occupied by royalty. At the palace at Tsarskoe Selo, the apartments of the late Emperor are kept in the state in which he left them, when he set out on his last journey to the south: untenanted, but ready, as if for his return; even to the minutiæ of the toilet table and articles of dress. The room in which the Emperor Paul fell, is closed, and the palace is converted into a kind of college. The Hermitage is converted into a picture gallery; the marble palace is desolate and abandoned; and the Taurida has become a mere monument of the past. It does not appear reasonable that the glories of the Winter Palace should be offered up to the manes of the present Emperor even: and yet who would attempt to break through the charm of superstitious reverence, which has been so sedulously practised upon the people?

It is reported of the Heir Apparent, that he is not much imbued with these feelings; and that,

notwithstanding his mildness of disposition, his mind soars above the weaknesses which have bound his race to popular observances. His reign will be looked to with anxiety, as an important era, by the Russians, who expect much from his avowed opinion on the subject of the serfs. He is anxious for their emancipation; but the danger of attempting it is great, and twofold: either he must disappoint the already excited expectations of the serfs themselves, by withholding their freedom; or, he will raise a fatal conspiracy among the Nobles, who will stedfastly resist all innovation on their property and feudal rights. A revolution from this source would be inevitable, and a change in the form of government but a natural result. The serfs would not be able to discriminate between rational liberty—an emancipation from feudal oppression, and uncontrolled licence. Already an outbreak has occurred through some misunderstood expression of the Emperor: and the district in which the serfs rose was devastated in their unbridled passions with fire and sword. The obrok or head-money which the proprietors receive from their serfs for permission to be absent from the soil, and to labour elsewhere, is too important an item in the income of the Russian nobles to be parted with on easy terms. One or two names have been cited to me of men holding their hundred thousand serfs; ten and twenty thousand are no uncommon numbers of

these *glebæ ascripti*, belonging to one man. They trade, and many have realised large fortunes; but, as it is optional with their masters to free them, they continue in a state of vassalage: notwithstanding that they offer large sums for their freedom. Singular pride, which permits a man to say, "I have a serf richer than myself."

The Admiralty Square, in which the Winter Palace stands, is unequalled, I believe, in extent, and certainly in inconvenience, by any other in Europe, on account of its vast dimensions, and the clouds of dust which envelope it on the least breath of wind. It contains the Senate-house, the Isaac's Cathedral, the War-office, the Etat-major, the Admiralty, and two large riding-schools, besides some other public buildings, each occupying an extensive frontage; and yet the importance of these edifices is lost in the area before them. One hundred thousand men may be manœuvred in it with ease: and it is an occasional whim of the Emperor to cause the whole of the troops stationed in and about the city, amounting to full that number, to pass in review before him in the square, with their artillery, pontoons, and all the munitions of war. Such a force, besides innumerable spectators, filled this vast area on the occasion of erecting the celebrated monolith, raised by the present Emperor to the memory of his brother, the late Emperor Alexander. The shaft of this pillar, which is of red granite and without

a join or flaw, is eighty-four feet high; and it was slung and fixed upon its pedestal without the slightest accident. It is, certainly, in every respect a stupendous monument: but it is misplaced, for it loses in importance and scale from the immense space around.

The far-famed statue of Peter the Great, which the Empress Catherine II. caused to be erected to his memory, occupies another extremity of the Admiralty Square. It would be more pertinent, perhaps, to say that the statue was erected in honour of him, since his memory is imperishable, at least in Russia: it is one of the glories of the empire, and is identified with its present grandeur. The greatness of the Czar Peter is every where present: his era constituted the broad road from civil darkness to the new system which he created; from this epoch events and dates are reckoned: and it forms, as it were, the great landmark in the chronological stream of Russian history. The statue, as is well known, is equestrian; and to the Russian it is an object of veneration, not only for the proud associations it awakens in his mind, but for the glory he attaches to it, as an unrivalled national monument: he has studied it under all aspects and positions, and delights in placing himself at a particular angle of the Admiralty Boulevard towards dusk, when, under the subdued light, it stands out in bold relief against the sky. In this

impressive statue, the sculptor, M. Falconet, has united the greatest simplicity with the most perfect grandeur of conception. He was indebted to no other statue, either ancient or modern, for the design, which, unique of its kind, expresses most admirably the character of the man and of the nation over which he reigned. The pedestal is an enormous mass of granite, forming an inclined plane, up the ascent of which the horse is labouring, and appears to have nearly reached the summit. The attitude has afforded a fine opportunity for the display of skill and anatomical knowledge, especially in the modelling of the horse's hind quarters; on which the whole weight of the animal is necessarily thrown: to preserve a due equilibrium in the balance of the metal of which the statue is composed, these parts are loaded with lead. The figure of the Czar is full of fire and animation: he is seated on a bear's skin, and is clad in a simple tunic and mantle, not characteristic of a particular age or country, but such as might be worn becomingly by the inhabitant of any. He looks in the direction towards which the right hand points, apparently at a distant object, supposed to be the citadel, where the first foundation of his infant capital was laid. On the side of the rock is inscribed *Petro Primo, Catherina Secunda*, 1782: an inscription, the pregnant simplicity of which implies a volume, of which history furnishes the contents.

It is recorded of Falconet, that, while working on the model, he tried to catch, as far as possible, the genuine feelings of the great Muscovite monarch, and to give him such an expression as the Czar himself would have owned. "I have not decked his person," said he, "with emblems of Roman consulage, nor placed a marechal's baton in his hand: an ancient dress would have been unnatural, and the Russian one he himself wished to abolish. The skin, on which he is seated, is emblematical of the nation he refined. Possibly the Czar would have asked me, why I did not put a sabre into his hand: but, perhaps, he made too great a use of it when alive. A sculptor ought only to exhibit those parts of a character which reflect honour on it, and should seek rather to draw a veil across the errors and vices which tarnish it. A laboured panygeric would have been equally injudicious and unnecessary, since history has already performed that office with impartial justice, and held up his name to universal regard. I must do Her Majesty the Empress the justice to say, that she had taste and discernment enough perfectly to see this, and to prefer the present short inscription to any other which could be composed."

A laughable incident connected with this statue occurred a few days since. Some American sailors, who had been making rather too free with the jolly god, sallied forth on a frolicsome cruise,

and one of them, not having the fear of the police before his eyes, climbed over the iron palisade surrounding the statue, and, clambering up the rock, seated himself *en croupe* behind the Emperor. He was speedily dismounted, and, after a night's confinement, was brought before the divisional officer of police. His case was summarily disposed of, and so heavy a fine inflicted, that he naturally remonstrated. "No, no," said the officer, "we can make no abatement: if you will ride with great people, you must pay great people's price."

From the total absence of everything like comfort, cleanliness, or attendance, at the hotels in St. Petersburg, several boarding-houses have sprung into existence; which, being conducted by English women, combine every advantage that a traveller can expect or require. Those kept by Miss Benson on the English Quay, and by Miss Dee in the Galerny, are extremely good: the attention and arrangement of those ladies leave nothing to be desired. They are frequented by numbers of English and Americans, and occasionally by travellers of other nations; and, as English is naturally the language used, there is less constraint and reserve, probably, than at other tables in the empire of a public nature.

I have mentioned elsewhere, that the Russians are most apt imitators, and prompt of comprehension; they are also "perilous linguists." One of the men servants in the house in which I am staying

has contrived to make himself tolerably conversant with English, merely from hearing it spoken at table; but as he has been in the habit of seeing more Americans than English, and has picked up his ideas of our language from them, he thinks it a borrowed one on our part, and assigns its origin to America; declaring that he does not speak English, but American!

Very few of the serfs who have succeeded in purchasing their freedom, remain in service; but where such is the case, they assume a self-importance, and exact a deference from, and superiority over, other domestics: it is a caricature of the great national tyranny. I have just witnessed a most ludicrous instance of it, which I give as an example of the ruling principle in Russian society. The Dvorniks or yard-servants, whose occupations place them in an inferior grade, are treated as subordinates, even by the other servants of the house. One of these men in our establishment had a sister about to be married, and, being anxious to give the utmost éclat to the ceremony, urgently pressed the housemaid to grace it with her presence. Her scruples being at length overcome (for the lady had considerable pretensions, from having purchased her freedom), she exacted that he should have a carriage at the door to carry her to the scene of festivity, and that he should not presume to ride with her otherwise than

standing behind as a footman! Having had a hair-dresser to arrange her curls and flowers, she was handed into the vehicle with the utmost gallantry and politeness, and the happy Andrew jumped on the footboard, delighted with her condescension.

LETTER III.

"Paternal Government" of Russia.—Habits of the Emperor. — Servile Subjection and universal Venality of the Russians. — Punishment of Flogging. — Arbitrary Imprisonment. — Howard and other Philanthropists. — State of Prisons in Russia. — Siberia the Doom of the Condemned. — Fatal Consequences of imprisoning Witnesses. — Tyranny of the Police.

RUSSIA boasts that it is under a paternal government, and deludes itself with the pleasant fiction involved in the phrase. The people either do not or pretend not to perceive that all the laws are calculated to aid oppression, and that those who have the greatest cause for complaint are excluded from their rights, and divested of the independence necessary to obtain redress. Surely the true meaning of the phrase is despotism on the throne, and tyranny every where. A government asserting this prerogative, keeps a nation, not only in leading-strings, but in actual bondage. The development of its power is constantly cramped and circumscribed, and its energies are paralysed by the caution necessary to be observed. Literature is at a low ebb, because of the censorship of the press; the arts and sciences languish

because the government monopolizes the direction of them; and manufactures are oppressed by the competition of the government: instead of promoting and encouraging these legitimate efforts, it has established vast works of many descriptions, which it carries on for its own profit, now that the necessity of example has ceased. It is impossible that one head can administer the affairs of so vast an empire in all its departments, without the existence of numerous and scandalous abuses, for the very avenues by which information is obtained are polluted, and the facts themselves are distorted and self-interested.

But the Emperor, since he has undertaken the task, devotes his utmost energies to accomplish it; and, I believe, conscientiously. It is said that he affects to imitate Napoleon in some things; and certainly, as regards his interference with and personal direction of everything, he is not behind his prototype. His cabinet is a plain room, and completely that of a man of business; he is never out of uniform, and never lays aside his cocked-hat and flowing white panache, excepting he leaves the capital, when he wears a little white foraging-cap. With the noblest and most commanding form, he is of Herculean mould, and of an iron constitution, regardless alike of bodily and of mental fatigue: controlling and inspecting every department and establishment himself, he seems

possessed of the power of ubiquity. Perfectly unattended, he is either dashing through the streets in a little two-horsed droshky, or walking through the crowded thoroughfares, visiting the dock-yards, barracks, hospitals, and other government establishments. He arrives when least expected, and the consequence is that there is no negligence or inattention; but precision, military precision, and uniformity prevail throughout. The very passengers in the streets, and particularly the military, who form a large proportion of the crowd, must be on the *qui vive* to salute the monarch as he passes; and this, with the military, is a matter requiring some dexterity. No officer is allowed to appear in public out of uniform, excepting as regards the cocked-hat; this is half-uniform, and may be worn in any manner most convenient, and is thus seen surmounting the head at every possible angle: but for saluting, it must be worn cross-ways, and thus the wearer has to shift it to the required position, and at the same time to throw back his large grey cloak, to show that it conceals no neglect in the regulations as to dress. The effect of this manœuvre, while the body is being presented "front face," is very ludicrous. The common soldier has to take off his foraging cap, and to carry it for some distance in his hand, when passing an officer.

These observances may savour of discipline, but not of military bearing; they are not proofs of re-

spect, but rather of that servile subjection towards their superiors which reigns throughout the empire from the highest to the lowest,—with this remarkable addition as regards the latter, that the lower a man's rank and position is, the more tyrants he has to oppress him, and the greater is his submission. It is the Russian's birthright; and, whether from habit, or a congenital disposition, he never murmurs nor complains of his lot. The consciousness of his inferiority makes him conform the more readily, when he sees those of even elevated rank cringe and tremble before the powers above them. Thus the heart becomes callous to insult, and lost to those refinements of feeling which form the groundwork of civilisation. The Emperor is deified, because he is to his empire what the soul is to the body; but his satellites, the dispensers of his frowns and smiles, must be worshipped after a sterner manner: the one arises from choice and free-will, but the other from exaction and necessity.

Security in Russia hangs like the sword of Damocles: an incautious word, or an actual or alleged offence, may break the hair, and disgrace and ruin attend its fall. Virtue, and that high-souled ambition which devotes itself to gain honourable distinction by unceasing efforts to advance the public good, can take no root in such a soil; where cabal is ever insidiously at work to

undermine the reputation whose honesty of purpose would disclose, and eventually destroy, the system of corruption and oppression which holds an undisturbed dominion in the minds of all. The machinery employed to work these intrigues is so artfully contrived, that, while its operations are conclusive, its existence is unknown and unseen; and even the Emperor yields to its secret influence: with his own eyes he sees and judges of things, and as long as he finds punctilious regularity, and rigid discipline, outwardly observed, he believes that they are substantially so from their foundation; and not a mere lacquered covering to conceal deceptions and impositions, practised for the purpose of speculations and fraud. Truth, mercy, and justice, are unknown potentialities among the Russian virtues: their names are a mockery, and their worship is gold. Officials of every grade are poorly paid, and they are therefore open to any bribe, undeterred by either delicacy or scruples. The system is too common and universal to create the slightest remark, or to attach disgrace to the recipient: perhaps a little prudence is observed; but still persons, whose salaries are known to be under one hundred pounds a year, openly live at the rate of ten times that amount, derived from sources which are perfectly notorious. Bribery is a weed of such deep root and ancient growth, and so engrafted with the nature of the people, that neither the commands of the Emperor, nor a tenfold in-

creased stipend, would check it. The Empress Catherine openly espoused it; and it is recorded of her that, on some really honest functionary petitioning for an addition to his pay, which was insufficient for his support, she exclaimed, "The ass! I have led him to the manger and he refuses to eat."

But Russian venality in matters of justice is the most unpardonable feature of the evil. The scales are even here the most appropriate symbols of the Goddess, as significantly implying that the beam preponderates with the weightiest bribe. Is it that the mind retrogrades in the absence of those moral virtues which elevate the character of a people, relaxing its strict discipline from being subject to no controul from popular opinion; or does it intuitively conform to, and assimilate itself with, the order of things around it? A friend of mine being insulted by a droshky driver, ordered the man to take him to the next police station: there, a short statement, backed by a ten-rouble note, was conclusive, and, without being permitted a defence, the man was taken into the yard and flogged. The punishment is not inflicted with the object of disgracing the man; for that it would be useless to attempt; but its intention and effect, are to keep the spirit of subjection in full and undiminished power. Such scenes are common, but I never yet met with a person who

had witnessed one, nor have I ever known one to be described. Chance made me an exception on a former visit, when I noted down the following circumstances.

Attached to every house is a man called a dvornik, or yard-man; whose duty it is to keep the street clean in front of his master's house, to scrape the snow off the pavement, and to strew it with sand, to prevent accidents to foot passengers. The Emperor, in walking along the street, slipped and fell; he took down the name of the house he was passing, and, going straight to the nearest police station, directed the dvornik of that house to be seized and flogged. Short was the shrift allowed the offender; a Persian bastinado would not have been more prompt. Surrounded by all the dvorniks of the neighbourhood, collected for the purpose of being edified by the example, stood the unfortunate culprit, in the presence of the whole staff of the police of the district. In the centre of the yard lay a form and two bundles of birchen rods; and all was anxious expectation. At a signal every head was uncovered, in deference, I suppose, to the authority represented by the punishment; and though the thermometer was at ten degrees below freezing point, the offender was seized, stript school-boy fashion on similar occasions, and laid flat on the bench. One man sat on his legs, and another held his arms crossed beneath the bench, while on each side of him, with a bundle

of rods under their arms, stood two other lictors, cutting away alternately at him, and exchanging the rods as often as they got dull, until the whole were expended. The punishment was not severe: there was no blood drawn, and the man, who yelled horribly, walked away after its infliction: it was spun out to three or four hundred blows, cruelly meant and vigorously bestowed; but the art of rod-making has still to be learnt. Such is paternal discipline: a father correcting his children!

But justice (?) is not always thus prompt in its actions; persons arrested summarily, and arbitrarily imprisoned, experience great trouble in communicating with their friends, who are thus thrown into a state of the greatest doubt and anxiety. In going over the principal prison, a few days since, in company with an aide-de-camp of Count Essen, the civil governor of the city, who was deputed to attend me, I became the accidental cause of the liberation of an unfortunate black man; whose case, had it not been for the presence of the aide-de-camp, I should probably not have been allowed to hear. It appeared, from the prisoner's statement, that he had been servant to some English or American gentleman, who had died at Odessa; and, despairing of finding a vessel there to carry him back to the United States, of which he was a citizen, he had worked his way to St. Petersburg, where he had either lost, or been

robbed of, his passport. It was sufficient that he was without this valuable document, for him to be arrested and lodged in prison; where he had already been three months without an examination, or the means of proving his case, when he determined on addressing me. I confess I was not a little surprised to hear a familiar "How do you do, sir?" within those walls; and I did not readily distinguish from whom the voice proceeded, till I saw an anxious black face peeping through a grated window. He told me his tale, and I then equally astonished him by calling him by his own name; for the fact was I had accidentally heard that this man was missing, and that all trace of him had been lost by the American authorities. I of course promised to make his position known in the proper quarter; and in two days he was again a free man.

The memory of the philanthropist Howard, who died at Cherson in 1790, is much respected by the Russians; and probably, had his life been spared, he would have laid the foundation of a better system, as regards the prison discipline of the empire. A master mind like his, and the devoted energies of a life, can alone cope with the hydra-headed obstructions, and the multiplication of ceremonial difficulties and forms, with which the self-interest of parties, or the struggle for the preservation of power, perpetually seeks to baffle the course of improvement. The want of system

in the regulation of Russian prisons is much complained of; and the feeble efforts of philanthropy to soften the rigour of confinement are of little avail, where the foundation of the evil is in the administration of the laws, and in the oppressive power of the executives. Committees of benevolent individuals, many of them ladies, sanctioned by the authorities, are allowed free access to the prisons for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of their inmates; but, inexperienced as they are in the principles of classification, and of internal discipline, their cares are principally devoted to the personal comfort of the prisoners, and to the supplying them with clothing and books, and the implements and material for such trades as they are allowed to carry on. These charitable labours extend, of course, only to debtors and untried prisoners: after conviction, prisoners are sent either to Siberia, or to hard labour in the dock-yards and arsenals. In the lengthened interval between arrest and judgment, they are heaped pell-mell together, with no other distinction than that of sexes. The vagrant and the burglar, the debtor and the murderer occupy the same ward, without the slightest attempt at classification, except as regards noble debtors, who, by virtue of their rank, are separated from the common herd. Cleanliness (not of the person), and regularity as regards the minute observance of forms, are to an extent compulsory, from the fear of the sudden

and unexpected visits of the Emperor; but there is no ventilation: a heated and unwholesome air pervades the building, giving rise to numerous cases of the jail fever, and telling visibly on the countenances of those whose constitutions resist its influence.

"Lassat' ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate."

The moment the prison gate shuts on its victim, life, as regards the connections and associations of the past, may be considered as a vision, for with its realities the unhappy captive will have no more communion. From this moment the "parental care of the state" undertakes for him, and prepares him by a protracted and jealous confinement, for the new life he is destined to pursue. Whatever may be the denomination of the sentence, Siberia is his certain fate. In cases of crime, it is termed banishment accompanied with labour, increasing in severity according to the magnitude of the offence; but for misdemeanour and vagrancy the gentle epithet of colonisation, is applied to the edict which removes him for ever from all social intercourse. The proof of guilt or innocence may lie in a distant province, suspicion alone justifies the apprehension of an individual, and months, nay years, pass away in lengthened and detailed correspondence between the distant officials, founded on oral evidence extracted from the prisoner. I have myself spoken to parties who were

completing their third year of confinement, without a hope of having their cases decided.

As the means of enforcing the attendance of witnesses are unknown in Russia, excepting by keeping them secure, persons whose testimony is required, are actually confined till their services are required. Now to brave imprisonment, even in furtherance of the ends of justice, is beyond the ordinary bounds of patriotism: hence a tumult in the street, or a crime committed on the highway, is the signal for every passenger to fly in a contrary direction, in order to avoid the duty of giving evidence, which in other countries strengthens the arm of justice. Thus humanity suffers by this iniquitous abuse of arbitrary power; since to witness a transaction is equivalent to being *particeps criminis*: and, further, to render assistance in cases of accident, illness, or sudden death in the street, involves the humane person in the most dangerous responsibility; for a person found with a corpse must account for the death, and clear himself from the suspicion which his presence inevitably attaches to him. Ignorance, besotted ignorance, increases that hardness of heart and apathy to suffering which this dreadful regulation has made habitual to every Russian. A few days since, as I was walking through one of the principal streets a respectably dressed man before me staggered and fell. Like the Levite in the parable, I, with the other passengers "passed by

on the other side;" but I stood at a distance and watched the result. I saw as I passed the man, that it was a case of apoplexy, and that with immediate attention he might probably have recovered; but no, in opposition to the commonest dictates of reason, an inferior policeman, who was attracted to the spot, not daring to act without the authority of his superior, threw a cloth over the man's face, and left him to perish by suffocation while he went for help. The delay, to say nothing of the application of the cloth, was fatal.

How flagrantly deficient and ineffective must be the laws of this country, not only for the prevention and detection of crime, but for the protection of its people! The jealousy of the police is a poor substitute for safety; and the absence of confidence in their integrity, and the fear of being dragged within their vortex, only strengthen the tyranny they wield. The power of the police is indefinite, and the abuses of it are monstrous; slavish fear, and the dread of extortions and annoyance, combine to produce a willing submission. Flight or resistance are never even dreamt of: a cobweb would bind the limbs like a link of adamant. It is no unusual thing to see a procession of prisoners, passing from one district of the city to another, under the nominal charge of two or three subordinates, and the still more nominal security of a piece of pack-thread fastened

round the arm. All ideas of escape and self-preservation have vanished; the mind inevitably yields to the conviction that the whole empire is one vast prison-house, in which freedom exists only in a negative degree.

LETTER IV.

Universal Dread of the Police.—Penalty of Imperial Condescension.—Irrational Usages.—Ceremony of blessing the Waters.—Religion of Russia.—Fasting in Lent and Feasting at Easter.—Russian Superstition and Fatalism.

A GENTLEMAN residing on the English Quai, on returning home one night rather late, found the dead body of a man lying on the steps of his door: to allow it to remain would be subjecting himself to suspicion, and the most serious embarrassment; therefore, without hesitation, although at a little personal risk, he dragged the corpse to a distance, as the hunchback did in the Arabian Nights, but without jeopardizing another individual. Here, we have a practical instance of the disadvantages of a system, which, operating by fear and tyranny, destroys the powers which would render it protective and useful. It is an anomalous, as well as a most dangerous principle, to permit the police as an executive body to be invested with the powers of arrest and of judgment also: to maintain its consistency, it must be infallible; and hence its decisions justify its captures. The police is not made for the people, but the people for the police; it is not a protective

body, but an aggressive and controlling power; arrogating to itself the privilege and exclusive faculty of directing the conduct, and even developing the tastes of the public. To use a Highland proverb, "there is nothing too hot or too heavy for them;" and their inventive and jealous spirit is ever ready to torture the most simple transaction into a serious wrong.

It is not unusual for the Emperor to stop and address a person in the street; but the luckless individual has little to boast of in so flattering a distinction: in a moment he is arrested, by one of the ubiquitous agents of the police, and charged with the offence of having addressed the Emperor. He is authoritatively required to repeat the substance of what he had said; and a confinement of some days inevitably follows: which the administration of a bribe, or the exertion of some powerful influence can alone terminate. This occurred to a celebrated French actor, who having been ill, and unable to perform for some time in consequence, was accosted by the Emperor, who inquired after his health, and urged him to resume his theatrical functions as soon as possible. The unfortunate actor was immediately arrested, and had some trouble in getting liberated. The circumstance reached the ears of the Emperor, who, wishing to make him some reparation, desired to know in what manner *he could oblige him.* "*In* nothing, sire," replied the comedian, "but that

your Majesty will never condescend to speak to me in the street again."

These perambulations of the Emperor are often, like those of Haroun al Raschid, attended by singular adventures. I recently witnessed the following incident. Two or three little boys begged of the Emperor as he was passing along; of course without knowing him: he gave them money, but finding he had overlooked one, he desired the lad to follow him: a public droshky driver, however, having whispered to the boy who his leader was, the little urchin fled at his utmost speed. The Emperor ordered a couple of soldiers who were standing near, to fetch the boy back; but the urchin threw himself on the ground, and offered such violent resistance, that they were compelled to carry him by force to the Emperor's presence, who, smiling at the scene, directed them to take him to the palace, where he was probably transferred to one of the military schools.

I have dwelt somewhat at length on the subject of the police, for, as the regulating power of the Empire, it stamps the whole system of Russian society: indeed, it has been one of the most influential institutions for forming the national character; and it is thus, by examining into the nature of the causes, that we are better able to judge of the effects.

Free-will, self-reliance, and independent action,

are qualities unknown in the composition of the Russian character. Fettered by the state of pupillage in which they are kept by the government, and controlled by ignorance and superstition, which it is not the interest of the priesthood to dispel, the Russians are capable of no spontaneous moral effort, nor of any voluntary assumption of responsibility. Some of their usages and observances partake so much of the absurdities practised in the East, which are so vividly described by Morier in his amusing tales, that, were they not avowedly fixed on a religious basis, the analogy would be perfect. But yet religion, as a feeling is not the true ingredient; for a mere mechanical obedience, without the slightest expression of thanksgiving or prayer, is the darkest superstition: it has not even the merit of outward form. For example, the roads may be in good order for sledges, but yet they are not to be so used till the feast of St. Nicholas; the fields may be green with herbage, but the cattle must not be driven forth till the festival of St. Stephen; the weather may be most propitious, but the plough may not be put into the land till the anniversary of St. George; and even an apple may not be gathered till St. Mary's day, when, whether ripe or not, they are indiscriminately eaten.

Twice in the year, namely, on the first days of January and August, the waters are blest by the priests. On the former of these days, the cere-

mony, as performed at St. Petersburg, is as imposing as the array of mitred bishops and other orders of clergy, the presence of the Emperor with a brilliant staff, and a dense mass of soldiery, can make it. However inclement the weather, however severe the cold, the ceremonial is neither suspended nor curtailed. On the frozen surface of the river, a temple-shaped building is erected, richly hung with tapestry, and decorated with the banners of the church, and other ornaments of a religious character; a flight of steps in the centre of the building leads down to a large hole broken through the ice. The shores and the icy surface of the stream are covered with thousands of spectators; and, amidst the roar of artillery, the gorgeous procession slowly winds its way from the palace. The benediction being concluded, and a large silver vessel having been filled with the water for church purposes, the procession retires in the same order. Happily the distance is not great, nor the service long, for state uniforms, and other full-dress costumes, without the protection of either cloak or wrapper, are but ill adapted to the exposure which etiquette requires. The withdrawal of the actors in this scene is the signal for a most tumultuous rush on the part of the populace, who, with bottles and vessels of all descriptions, precipitate themselves down the steps to obtain a supply of the water, which is considered to possess most extraordinary

virtues in curing diseases. It was formerly the custom to immerse infants in the stream on these occasions, as being more holy and efficacious than the usual form of baptism, but as many of them died from the effects, it is no longer permitted. I have been credibly informed that not a few infants perished on the spot, by slipping from the benumbed hands of the metropolitan; who, nothing daunted by the mishap, exclaimed, "God giveth, God taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord," —— "Give me another child."

The ceremony in August is a mere miniature affair, and from what I witnessed, appears to be more a matter of form than a religious rite.

The religion of the Russian is more matter of belief and ceremonial than of action: he seldom combines faith and works. He will commit a robbery, and forthwith proceed to the church to cross and prostrate himself; and, not improbably, he will commit the same crime at the first possible opportunity. A figure of the Virgin Mary, with a burning lamp before it, hangs within his shop, and his patron saint occupies an additional niche; but he will not hesitate to impose upon his customers to the utmost of his power: his conscience is no graven table, but stands self-absolved by the spongelike virtue of his creed. I have seen the steps of a church crowded with people, awaiting the exit of a bishop, to kiss his hands, clothes, and

even his feet; his holy touch being regarded as an act of regeneration.

The whole period of Lent is kept so rigidly as a fast, that not an atom of animal substance enters into the food used at that time; vegetable oil, not of the best quality, being substituted for butter: I have known a person have recourse to an emetic after having incautiously eaten something of which an egg had formed an ingredient. This lengthened mortification is borne with the most exemplary fortitude: but, unhappily, that is the only virtue attached to so praiseworthy a self-denial; for the moment the hour of midnight, on Easter eve, announces, with the roar of artillery and the ringing of bells, the glad tidings of release to the anxious multitudes, than the city is blazing with festivity, the eating-houses are thronged, and dissipation, and the grossest epicurism, reign with unbridled license. The churches up to this moment are densely thronged, especially the Kazan cathedral, around which a numerous body of priests, bearing banners and torches, and followed by crowds of people, wind in procession, seeking the body of the Saviour. They proclaim the search to have been unsuccessful, and commence from the altar, "Cristos voskriss," Christ is risen. A scene of general congratulation ensues: people embrace one another indiscriminately, and at least one good point is gained, out of the great mass of superstition and painful

absurdity, in this grand display of "brotherly love." Piled up in the recesses of the church, and spread under the protecting interposition of the columns, are heaps of dishes with viands intended for the approaching banquets, after having received the blessing of the priest. It is difficult to say where devotion begins, or sensuality stops; if the service of the Creator be not altogether secondary to the gratification of the creature.

The fast, thus scrupulously observed, and riotously closed, is unproductive of the least moral good: instead of chastening the mind, and operating on its worldly tendencies, the sensual appetites, so long restrained, become impatient for its termination, and a scene of intolerable depravity and licentiousness ensues. A more complete exemplification of the parable of the unclean spirit, which, after walking through dry places, returned to its house, and found it swept and garnished, cannot be imagined. The temporal penalty is, however, in numerous instances soon paid; for, it is a well known fact, that more deaths ensue from the effects of this one debauch, than occur from like causes, throughout the empire, in a whole year.

The character of the Russian is more than tinged with superstition: he is imbued with it: he yields to its influences implicitly, and allows it to determine the most material actions of his life. The Russian is, besides, a fatalist; and thus, his superstitious fears, combined with the dread

he feels at doing any thing which, in his opinion, may controvert the irrevocable decrees of fate, leave him to be tossed to and fro, the sport of idle terrors and groundless apprehensions, without decision or energy of purpose.

Robbery from the person, and of property, in houses, is most common; but shopbreaking is a crime rarely heard of. The tradesmen, in many instances, particularly those of the public bazars, (which I will describe in another place,) do not reside at their business premises, which are thus left without protection: but, though availing themselves of all the precautions of bolts and bars, they trust less to them than to the superstition of their countrymen. They affix seals to their doors, and window-shutters; and, as St. Nicholas, the national saint, is supposed to be peculiarly the protector of such securities, no thief would venture to commit the sacrilege of breaking them, while bars and chains would offer no impediment to his violence. Individual cases of superstition are numberless; but it would be difficult to find a more striking illustration of it as a general principle, than in the above-named instance. In the days of paganism, the worship of Mercury would have been analogous.

Fatalism is a religious sentiment; and as it is the only one which exercises an active influence on the mind and conduct of the people, its effects are deadening. To appear to resist the

immutable decrees of Providence, or even to prepare against their possible manifestation, would be regarded as an offence equal to tempting the Almighty; rebelling, in short, against the fate assigned at his birth to each one of the human race. So tenacious are the Russians of this sentiment, that the establishment of a life assurance company by the English merchants was at first looked upon as an act of impiety and godless hardihood. The advantages of Life Assurance, however, are beginning, but very slowly, to be appreciated, and the rules of the company, probably to meet the jealous fears of the Russians, are not so severe as in this country. The facility of raising loans on the deposit of the policy as a security, and the great benefits which are seen to arise to the families of those whose lives had been insured, have done much to weaken the national prejudice; but still the objections are deep-rooted.

I have seen men act with astounding recklessness and daring, from the strength of their belief, that nothing, which they can do, will avert, either the manner or the moment of their death. They peril life and limb with a foolhardiness which would be inconceivable on other grounds. Undeterred by the scorching heat, and regardless of burning rafters falling around them, men ply their axes in the very heat of a fire, without a thought of dangerous consequences. Place them on the ice to restore the bridges, which

have been cut away to diminish the pressure of the floating masses, and they toil with the same indifference as to safety; drifting down the stream on detached pieces of ice, and forcing them by their weight beneath the already compact field. It is not the absence of fear, but the abandonment of life to an inevitable destiny; similar in every respect to the *kismet* of the East. The operation of fatalism upon them is not a stimulant to exertion, but simply a passive obedience to a pervading principle: and, however deplorable it may be, it is yet most serviceable in its effects; for, the Russians being habitually passive under their mortal doom, conform the more readily to any changes and destinations which the authorities compel them to undergo: they follow as implicitly the path of life marked out for them, as if it had been pointed to by the finger of God. But it must be owned, that, so long as fatalism continues to be the ruling principle of life and faith among a nation, the intellect of the people is in too low a state, and their capacity for mental freedom[s] too limited, for them to advance a step towards self-emancipation or constitutional government; and, the maintenance of power being the sole object of the state in Russia, it would be prejudicial to its interests to subvert a doctrine so conducive to that passive and blind obedience which despotism exacts from the subjects of its tyranny.

LETTER V.

Religion of Russia.— The Marriage Ceremony.— Funeral Rites.— The Passport to Heaven!—"Recollection Monday."— National Character influenced by Religion and Superstition.— Despotism defers to popular Prejudices.— Talent and Courage of the Emperor Nicholas.— He quells the Cholera Riots with a word.— Church Architecture of Russia.— Dark Complexions of Christ and the Virgin Mother.— Costume of Priests of the Greek Church.

If Fanaticism be an innate characteristic of the Russians, its operations on the mind derive additional strength from the magnificent rites and ceremonies of the Greek church; which, captivating the imagination through the senses, leave an indelible impression on the mind. Religion, thus supported, ceases to be a feeling of the heart, and adoration of the Almighty becomes a mere ceremonial observance. It is inconceivable how a man of Mr de Chateaubriand's calibre could have seriously stated, "que le protestantisme est la religion des princes:" meaning that the visible presence of the head of the Romish church, in the person of the Pope, alone secures the independence of religion, and its exemption from the despotic interference and controul of temporal princes, whose powers are strengthened by the usurpation

of its authority. To reason from analogy, we may be allowed to take the converse, and to say that Romanism is the religion of the people; and then the annals of the French nation will show to what extent it guarded its sacred trust. And reversing the picture, let us turn to our James II., whose fall at once proclaims the error of M. de Chateaubriand's doctrine, and the triumph of a nation. Peter the Great, who could brook no rival power in his gigantic scheme of dominion, abolished the office and authority of the Patriarch, and constituted himself the head of the church; and this ecclesiastical authority his descendants have preserved, delegating the exercise of their functions to a synod. Toleration is permitted: indeed how could it be otherwise, in so vast an empire, embracing Mahomedism in the East, and Lutheranism in the West, besides numberless other denominations of religious belief among the many nations of different creeds and languages which it contains! But apostacy, or conversion from the Greek church, is a crime of the highest magnitude, visited by no less a punishment than deportation to Siberia.

The marriage ceremony, however solemn it may be accounted, as one of the offices of the Church, is so cloaked with theatrical effect, as to lose much of its spiritual sanctity. It would seem that the external senses rather than the feelings of the heart or mind were to be wrought

upon; or perhaps it is considered that the feelings are only impressed by the agency of the senses. Be this as it may, marriage is a drawing-room scene, under priestly auspices; lay frivolities are intermingled with ecclesiastical pageantry; and the theatrical effect is enhanced by its being made an evening performance. The exterior of the church is illuminated; but the brilliancy outside is eclipsed by the blaze of the interior, which, studded with candles and chandeliers, looks more like a saloon of pleasure than a temple of worship. The guests and friends invited to be present appear in full dress, and are marshalled to the respective sides of the building appropriated to them by a master of the ceremonies appointed for the occasion; the friends of each of the contracting parties being grouped together on either side, leaving the centre free: for there are neither pews nor seats of any kind in the Russian churches. The entrance of the bridegroom is welcomed by a chaunt from the choristers, who take a leading part in the ceremony: no instrumental music being allowed in the Greek churches; and a bridesman immediately hurries to the residence of the bride to notify that her intended is awaiting her. This is often intimated gracefully and silently by the presentation of a bouquet of flowers. On the bride's arrival the choristers again chaunt a welcome, and she takes her place among her friends.

The dress of the bride is as sumptuous as jewels and the most costly articles can make it, if the means of her family admit of such a display. She is ushered into the assembly by a kind of procession, headed by one of her own family, bearing before him the richly ornamented picture of her saint, which is destined to occupy a corner of her future apartment, and which, during the ceremony, is placed on the high altar. A small temporary altar, or reading-desk, covered with rose-coloured silk and ornamented with silver fringe and lace, is placed in the centre of the parquet, at which the priest officiates.

The service is long, and consists in reading the lives of Abraham and Sarah, an exhortation to the new couple, and much singing. The rings are exchanged at the betrothal, and therefore that symbol forms no part of the service. The pair, bearing lighted tapers in their hands, and having large gilt crowns held over their heads, walk thrice round the altar, grasping the priest's robes, and during the exhortation they stand on a large piece of rich silk, which becomes the perquisite of the priest. This portion of the ceremony being concluded, the sacrament is administered, and the new married couple proceed to the grand altar, where they prostrate themselves with foreheads to the ground before the various pictures of the saints, and kiss them with many crossings and genuflections. The

congratulations of the friends now follow; the line of demarcation is broken through, and all parties assembled, both men and women, kiss each other. A brilliant supper awaits the whole party at the house (generally) of the parents of the bride; dancing is kept up to a late hour, and not unfrequently the pleasures of the table degenerate into excesses. Superstition permits of only certain days for the performance of the marriage ceremony; care being taken to avoid the eve of any fast or particular prayer day.

Previous to the marriage, the betrothed parties are naturally subject to the quizzings and sly jokes of their friends, including one very singular custom, to which they are expected to conform. At the dinner-table, if any one on filling his glass cries "gorkoe, gorkoe," (bitter, bitter,) the bridegroom elect is considered bound to remedy the alleged evil by kissing his intended.

The funeral service varies in importance, as regards both the external display and the pomp of the Church ceremony, according to the rank of the deceased. The procession paraded through the streets, the hearse being canopied with cloth of gold, and followed by a long train of carriages, is but a prelude to the gorgeous and solemn scene which is enacted in the church. An altar, like a platform, raised on a succession of steps, receives the richly ornamented coffin; from which the

arched lid is removed, leaving the corpse prominently exposed. A crowd of officiating priests dressed in the costume appropriate to the ceremony, chaunt and recite the service, assisted by the choir. It is very long, consisting of several parts; at one of which lighted tapers are distributed to all the congregation, while a priest holding one of three branches, emblematical of the Trinity, waves it round the corpse; he then pours a dark kind of incense into the coffin, and reads a long printed paper, which he afterwards thrusts into the breast of the deceased. The friends then mount the steps, kiss their departed friend, and the priest closes the ceremony by throwing a muslin veil over the body; the lid of the coffin is then replaced, and the procession winds its way to the cemetery; which, being without the city, is two or three miles distant. Few of the friends venture thus far; for, considering their duties to have been completed at the church, they leave the last act to the officials. The streets for some little distance in the line of the procession are strewed with the small tips of fir branches; and a most ruffianly-looking set of men, more or less numerous according to the importance of the funeral, wearing slouched hats and loose black robes, and carrying lighted torches, follow in files by the side of the procession.

I introduced myself a few days since as a spec-

tator at the funeral of a major of the Cuirassiers de la Garde; and the church being full of military men, all of whom I knew could not be connected with the deceased, I ventured to seek a little explanation. The deceased lay exposed in full uniform; and when the priest unbuttoned the coat, to insert the paper before mentioned, I begged of an officer standing next to me to explain that part of the ceremony. He looked at me *du haut en bas*, and, just as I was on the point of offering an apology, he said, in a tone which indicated his surprise at my ignorance and want of faith, that it was the passport to St. Peter to open the gates of heaven to the deceased! Can this be a Christian country, I asked myself; where I see the priests practising such gross delusions, and promulgating a doctrine little short of idolatry, and entirely subversive of that laid down by our Saviour? If sincere, how totally unacquainted must they be with the tenets of Christianity! and if dissemblers, how deep must be their guilt, in imposing on the credulity and ignorance of the people! This pretended assumption of the Divine power to bind or to loose, is perhaps the most effective weapon in the hands of an ambitious hierarchy: for, if acknowledged, church domination must be supreme, since no one would be found hardy enough to risk his future state by disobedience to the priestly will. The influence of superstition artfully wielded, makes the task of

government easy, where the nation is unenlightened.

At the cemetery, where no further service is performed, the simple duty of committing the body to the grave alone remains. Should any of the friends be present, the sexton takes round to them a small basket containing earth, and a spoon; that they may literally aid in burying the deceased by casting the first instalment of earth on his remains.

In Roman Catholic countries it is usual to devote All Saints' Day to the memory of the dead, by visiting the cemeteries and other places of interment, to repair the perishable memorials of the departed, and to replace the flowers and other little offerings, which silently attest the affection which lasts beyond the tomb: a pious act, giving birth to the most salutary influences: for a time the worldly spirit is subdued, and the survivors return home with chastened feelings and serious thoughts, excited by grateful though saddened recollections, which the hallowed duties of the day have renewed.

The Russian church devotes to this solemn purpose the Monday after Easter; hence called Pominatelnui ponyedelnĕk, or Recollection Monday. Both the Romish and Greek churches had doubtless the same object in view, in instituting this usage; by setting apart a day of commemoration, to discipline the minds of their flocks by

contemplation, and those serious reflections which the nature of their duty and the solemnity of the occasion would so naturally awaken; and that, while meditating on the social loss they had sustained, they might bow with reverential submission to that destiny which awaits themselves, and which had freed their departed friends from the sorrows of this world, to rise again to the joys and happiness of an endless life. But while the Roman Catholic spends the day with decency and propriety, the Russian of the Greek Church brings it to a close in revelling and drunkenness. The thousands who congregate together, seem rather in the enjoyment of a national holiday, than as having met on a mournful anniversary: cloths are spread on the earthen mounds, and the flat stone slabs of the graves; eatables of all descriptions are piled on them, the hissing samavar is provided for tea, and bottles of beer, punch, and other compounds stand ready to enliven their spirits. "Here's to the memory of Ivan Dimitrivitch," says one, with a glass of brandy in his hand. "Poor Ivan! he cannot drink himself, and therefore we will drink for him." In drowning their sorrow (?) the reason is drowned also; and at the conclusion of this day of funereal picnics, the streets are thronged with helpless beings reeling towards their homes, and "Recollection Monday" ends in an oblivion of debauchery. This profanity does not exist among the higher

classes, who, having performed their duties, retire at an early hour.

Interment in the churches is entirely prohibited, excepting as regards the imperial family. One solitary departure from the law was permitted in the case of the celebrated Kutusof, whose remains are deposited in the Kazan cathedral. No costly monument is erected over the spot, which is indicated by a little obscure tablet placed close to the ground: but perhaps the noblest record of his memory and greatness is the bâton of Field Marshal Davoust, which was taken on the retreat of the French from Moscow, and now hangs on a column adjoining the grave of Kutusof. The wealthiest classes are very generally buried in cemeteries attached to different convents: the price paid for this privilege is beyond measure exorbitant, amounting to many thousand roubles.

How extensively may the manners and customs of a people be traced to their religious rites, the influence of the priesthood, and their cherished superstitions! All these combine to form the leading features of the national character, and influence the minor details of its composition. The skilful application of this knowledge, strengthens the hands of a government, while, to appearance, it seems to be indifferent to the advantage: for, to acknowledge that it fosters national prejudices would be to disclose one of its sources of power. For instance; there is one

point which not even the Emperor dares overrule. Russia is the only country in Europe which continues to compute time by the Julian year, or old style, as it is termed; and its non-conformity to the otherwise general system of the Gregorian cycle, arises from a fear of doing violence to the ignorance and superstition of the people. The change would be beyond their understandings on the one hand, and insulting to their superstition on the other. The attempt to curtail the year, per saltum, of twelve days, in order to reconcile a point, to them as unintelligible as it would be unimportant, would be contemplated with consternation by both people and priests: the impiety of disfranchising twelve saints in the calendar—for every day has its saint,—and of putting them on the shelf for one year, would be a dangerous experiment, as manifesting a disregard for the sanctity of the church, and a defiance of popular prejudice; both of which form fundamental parts of the imperial power. Even absolute despotism has limits and restraints to its dominion; and although its sceptre holds its sway in virtue of popular ignorance, yet respect must be paid to that ignorance, or rather to the prejudices which it fosters.

No man probably knows the human mind better than the Emperor Nicholas; and his life has been marked by several extraordinary displays of heroism and self-devotion, in which he has availed himself of the very cause of tumult to arrest its

progress: turning thus the very weapon of attack into a means of defence. In the memorable year of the cholera, 1831, the public mind was much disturbed by the belief that the epidemic was occasioned by poison, and on its first appearance at Moscow public disturbances were apprehended: but they were prevented by the prompt interposition of the Emperor. I quote the words of the late Sir George Lefevre in his treatise on cholera. "The Emperor immediately hurried off to that capital (Moscow), and contributed much by his presence to calm the public mind. His presence at St. Petersburg was not less valuable, as, from misunderstanding on the one hand, and evil disposition on the other, everything contributed to excite popular commotion: but as soon as his Majesty was apprised of the proceedings, he hastened to town from his country residence, and his presence not only quelled all temporary commotion, but disorder entirely ceased, and was not again renewed."

The fact is, that a belief in a general system of poisoning became so confirmed, that the populace rose, with the intention of destroying the cholera hospital, and of massacring the physicians. Some rioting ensued, and a mob of several thousands had collected, when the Emperor appeared suddenly among them. The effect was electrical. He placed himself on the steps of a church commanding the whole square, and, declaring that it was the hand

of God, and not the work of man, which had brought the visitation upon them, ordered the whole mass to fall on their knees to pray God for forgiveness, and to withdraw the calamity from them. Immediate tranquillity ensued, and enthusiastic reverence for the man grew out of threatened violence and destruction. The trait was noble, and the judgment perfect, which, appealing to the religious feelings of the people, disarmed ignorance of its brutality.

The external architecture of the Russian churches differs very little, if any; the general figure being that of a Maltese cross, with as many domes as there are minarets to a Mahommedan mosque. The rule appears to be to encircle one large cupola with four smaller ones, and to cover them with gilded copper, or to paint them blue, bespangling the surface with gold stars. To the former class belongs the dome of the new Isaac's Cathedral, which is little inferior in its dimensions to that of St. Paul's, and required 180 pounds weight of ducat gold to cover its surface. But at Moscow the taste for the gaudy and fantastic is carried to a greater length; and it is here more conspicuous, from the greater number of churches that city contains, and the diversity of ornament which distinguishes them: gilt, silvered, painted blue, red, green, or in chequers like a harlequin's dress, or in concentrical curves, like the figures called Turks' caps, drawn by children;

each one is decorated different from its neighbour, except in having a stupendous cross surmounting the principal dome. There is much of eastern effect in this; and this idea is not dispelled by the general appearance of a crescent at the foot of the cross. These huge crosses are secured from the effects of violent winds and other accidents by four gilt chains meeting at a common centre on the top of the cross, and brought down to as many different angles on the top of the roof. The effect of the festoons, which these chains form, is extremely graceful, and harmonizes with the general *bizarre* appearance of the whole structure. The ornaments within are costly, and, in many instances, barbarous; a pagan temple can hardly be more so. What is denied them in sculptured figures they make up by paintings of Christ, the Virgin, &c.; which are decked in real head-dresses, of gold and silver, and sometimes with complete habits of the same materials richly embossed with the most costly gems; and leaving only the faces and hands exposed for the homage and kisses of the people.

It is remarkable, that in these pictorial representations the Saviour and the Virgin Mary are painted black, or at least of the deepest Indian olive colour, nearly approaching to it; and it is not improbable that, in this particular, they give a juster idea of the complexions of Jesus Christ, and of his mother, than Raphael or Guido; since the

Syrians of inferior condition, who are exposed to the sun in the climate of Palestine, must necessarily be of a deep tawny complexion. Sebastian del Piombo, in his celebrated picture of the "Raising of Lazarus," in our National Gallery, appears to have acted on this idea.

The priests or popes, as they are called, are dressed in vestments not altogether unlike the Romish clergy: they are mostly composed of heavy tissue and expensive silks richly embroidered with gold and silver, but varying in character, according to the nature of the service to be performed. The dress of the ecclesiastics in the streets is a violet-coloured silk robe, with a broad-brimmed hat, surmounting a head whose flowing hair and long beard, carefully combed, form a cape or tippet around the upper part of the person. A silver chain and crucifix dependent beneath this fringe of hair, and a gold-headed cane, of such portentous length that it is grasped almost in the centre, complete the costume of the priests.

LETTER VI.

Perilous Position of St. Petersburg.—Ambitious Policy of Russia.—Frequent Rise of the Neva.—Inundation of St. Petersburg.—Canals.—Bridges over the Neva.—Russian Venality.—Ice fields.—Trotting-matches on the Ice.—Ice hills.—English Ice boat.—Ceremony of opening the River.—Gross instance of petty Tyranny.—Ambition and Servility of the People.—Example of Russian "Discipline."—The Troubetzkoi family.—Thermometers.—Phenomena of extreme Cold.—Drying Clothes by Frost.—Ruinous effects of want of Snow.—Preparations for Winter.—Magical effects of Rime Frost.—Sledges.—Equipage of the Empress.—Costume of the Coachmen.

PUBLIC attention is occasionally drawn to the perilous position of this city; for, raised by art in opposition to all natural difficulties and danger, it must ever hold a most precarious tenure. Ambition, and the determination to extend its frontier beyond the opposite banks of the Neva, determined Peter the Great in selecting this site for his new capital; in the erection of which, if the consumption of human life may be omitted from our consideration, he exhibited a vigour and perseverance which no difficulties could daunt. The history of this Czar recounts the great personal sacrifice to which he submitted, in order to make Russia a powerful maritime country, and to raise a naval

force for her aggrandizement. A sea port on the Baltic was necessary for the completion of that great scheme, of which his prophetic eye may have seen the development, although its realisation is left for future generations to witness. Most certainly his spirit has descended to his successors, and the object he had in view remains in force to the present day. Safe within herself, and holding a preponderating influence in the Baltic (which has assumed the character of a Russian lake), of what real national benefit is the gigantic naval force of Russia? She has no commerce to protect, no colonies to defend. For six months in the year the seasons dispute her sovereignty over the sea, and during the other six the jealousy of other nations compels her to confine her squadron within her own limits. Thus Russia, notwithstanding her extent of territory, and the rank she holds among the first powers on account of her resources and strength, is as much circumscribed as states of inferior magnitude. The problem however remains to be solved, whether Russia, with her immense army, will continue to retain her singular position as a first-rate naval power in two land-locked seas, the gates of which are imperatively closed against her. Her far-seeing policy and untiring ambition aim at one sole object: namely, a footing on those privileged shores which would give her a right to the free unrestricted navigation of the seas, and a voice in

the great questions of maritime law. The barriers of the Sound are dependent on those of the Bosphorus; as the possession of the latter would give a right to the passage of the former; and hence the coveting grasp which is so often extended towards the Turkish provinces. The jealousy of rival nations may seek to preserve the balance of power, and avert the evil day; but the purpose will continue in undiminished force, till time and circumstances shall present the desired opportunity, which will be seized with eager promptitude.

The Baltic, like other inland seas, is not under the influence of tides, but it is peculiarly subject to currents, produced by the agency of the winds. Thus a west or south-west wind forces the water up the Gulf of Finland, causing a rise of several feet in the Neva; and this so rapidly, that, should the wind blow with any degree of violence, the river overflows its banks in the course of a few hours. A north-east wind, equally powerful in its effects, sends the waters back upon the Baltic, and so reduces the depth of water on the bar at the embouchure of the river, that navigation, excepting for very small crafts, is almost suspended during its continuance; and it is not at all unusual for the communication between the city and Cronstadt to be interrupted from this cause. In consequence of this very precarious state of things, and the loss and suffering which have already been experienced, and to which the city must

ever continue liable, a most vigilant watch is kept by the authorities, who give public warning, by signals and the firing of alarum-guns from the citadel, the moment the water has reached a certain point. No calamity of any serious nature has occurred since the 19th of November 1824, when the city was under water for some hours; and in some parts to the depth of fourteen feet, as indicated by red plates, descriptive of the event, affixed to the houses at the very point reached by the flood, and for the further purpose of defining the different levels of the city thus singularly marked. The loss of life and property was never known: or, if known, it was kept from the public with the usual unnecessary jealousy and secrecy of the police; but it is estimated that 20,000 persons perished: an amount which is probably not exaggerated, when it is considered how large a portion of the population reside in the cellars of the houses, and with what amazing rapidity the flood overtook them. This inundation, when the inclement season of the year, the violence of the wind, and the huge masses of ice which were borne along on the surface of the water, are taken into account, was a most appalling spectacle. It spread through the streets like a foaming sea: vessels were torn away with its impetuosity; timber and planks, crashing together, carried destruction in their course; the little station-houses of the police floated helplessly about, with the miserable tenants

clinging to the roofs for safety; the dead and dying encumbered the surface; while goods and furniture of all descriptions, mixed in the general wreck, completed the picture of desolation. A more awful and appalling scene cannot well be conceived; and to similar visitations the city must ever be exposed.

The numerous canals with which the city is intersected, and which communicate chiefly with the Neva, are furnished with broad quays faced with parapets of large blocks of granite; but, unlike those of other countries, the canals of St. Petersburg are not used for commerce: they were formed solely as drains to the marsh on which the city is built, and in imitation of the Dutch towns which Peter had visited. Thus they are dull and spiritless adjuncts to the scene, and are important to the inhabitants only from the facility they afford to the immense barges, in discharging their cargoes of fire-wood, and for the conveyance of building materials and rubbish. Hence the streets are less encumbered with heavy waggons and carts than the towns of other countries: occasionally, however, long lines of talegas may be seen passing in endless succession, laden with produce and merchandise from the interior; but by far the greatest proportion of goods is brought into the city to the different public warehouses by water conveyance, which extends to the south of Russia, through the medium of the Neva and the Volga, united at the

Ladoga lake by a canal. These canals are also extremely convenient to the inhabitants for the purpose of washing: the women pursue their avocations, regardless of season and weather, on little floating platforms on a level with the water; for, as pumps and other conveniences are unknown, these domestic duties must be performed at the water side; and even water for the table and other household uses is fetched in barrels from the river.

The channel of the Neva is generally of so great a depth that no attempt has been made till lately to construct a stationary bridge over its stream: indeed the great bodies of ice, which are brought down by the current at the setting in of winter, and which require a free passage, have led to the belief that no bridge of masonry could resist their pressure. The Emperor has, however, set himself to the task, and the permanent union of the two shores is already in progress. The communication is at present kept up by three pontoon bridges, which are compelled to be removed at the commencement of the winter, in order that the ice may meet with no obstruction in its passage. But when the ice is fast, and sufficiently strong to bear heavy weights, which is generally in a very few days, a great number of workmen are employed to cut a channel, and to haul the bridges back to their proper places. A considerable interruption to traffic, and much inconvenience, arise

from this suspension of the communication, as the bridges are frequently compelled to be removed at a minute's notice, and cannot be replaced again until after an interval of some days. This may occur several times before the river is perfectly fixed, and the risk of passing in boats among the huge and accumulating masses of ice is great, and often fatal. It is asserted, and I believe with some truth, that the ferrymen, who make a golden harvest at this time, bribe the bridgemaster to delay the restoration of the bridges to the latest possible period. National venality, like a prevailing epidemic, is irresistible; and, provided it can only be glossed over, however shallow the pretext, it absorbs every feeling and justifies every act. Discovery only brings a sharer to the spoil, and an unblushing accomplice is added to the scheme of fraud and oppressive wrong.

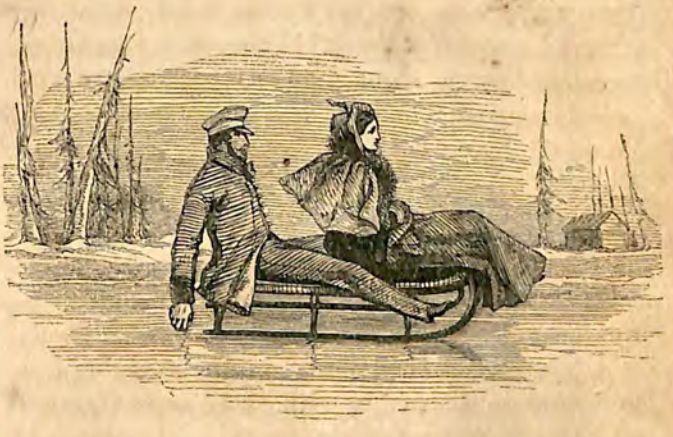
The approach of the ice, which comes down in large flakes from the Ladoga lake, driving and crashing every thing before it, is known by the perfectly still and oily (çalo) appearance of the water, and by the vapour which is thrown up. A bend in the stream suddenly arrests the ice in its progress, and the channel seems fixed; but some dislodgement occurs, and the ice is again in motion, tearing away and crushing in its irresistible course, the small craft and wood barks moored to the sides of the quays. It is a Polar sea in miniature. In the winter of 1841 this occurred

four times, and the bridges were as many times replaced. When the ice has gained a certain thickness, the police permit a free and indiscriminate passage over the river: foot passengers cross it in all directions, and roads are marked out for carriages by small fir trees stuck in avenues on the ice. Portions of the surface, free from inequalities, are railed off, from which huge blocks are cut out and carted away to fill the ice cellars with which every house is furnished. These blocks are parallelopipeds, from two to three feet thick, and weighing some eight or ten cwts.; the ice being perfectly pure and transparent. Places near the shore are kept open to enable the inhabitants to fetch water for domestic purposes, and for the convenience of the washerwomen, who pursue their work barefooted, with the thermometer at zero of Fahrenheit. A large space is also carefully levelled and enclosed for trotting matches in harness; a favourite amusement of the Russian merchants, who pride themselves on the speed and action of their horses. The sledges used for this purpose are of the slightest possible construction, not weighing more than fifty pounds. It is entirely a Sunday's amusement; as most of their pleasurable pursuits are.

Thus the river presents a scene of great animation and gaiety. Skating, which would naturally be supposed to be a continued source of amusement, is not practised beyond a few weeks; when

it is totally forsaken for the more exciting and agreeable pastime of the ice-hills, which by that time are prepared, and remain the great focus of attraction as long as the frost lasts. The Russian nobility, the English, the Germans and French, have each their separate hills, erected by subscription among themselves in some enclosed spot; and there are besides an immense number of public ones for the other classes. Two strong wooden towers, about fifty feet high, are erected nearly opposite to, but at a distance of several hundred feet from each other. A commodious flight of steps, at the back of each, leads to the summit, from which an inclined plane, at the sharpest possible angle, formed of immense blocks of ice, cemented together by water poured into the interstices, leads to the bottom or plane, which continues on a bed of similar blocks of ice, protected at the sides with little embankments of snow, to the end of the ground. Parties thus descend one hill, and by the impetus acquired, arrive rapidly at the end of the run, where they leave their sledges, which are carried by men employed for the purpose to the top of the other tower, when they again launch off. To the uninitiated this is rather hazardous sport, and every beginner has to pay his footing at the expense of some severe falls; for the least deviation from the true lien, particularly in descending the slope, when the speed is terrific, sends both the sledge

and its occupant headlong and whirling after each other in utter helplessness. The management of the sledge is however so simple that a few trials are sufficient to master it. The sledge is a slight frame-work of steel, about one foot high and three long, having a cushion on the top for the seat.



The rider places himself at the extremity with his legs advanced before him, and his hands, protected by strong gloves, touching the ice on either side, but rather behind him: these act as the rudder; for the slightest touch is sufficient to regulate the direction of the sledge even at its utmost speed. An adept takes charge of a lady, who sits between his legs, and away they dash; but I have seen some ladies kneel, and even stand on the sledge behind the gentlemen, and perform

the descent without the slightest risk. Although the speed cannot be less than thirty miles an hour, to the ladies this is a most agreeable and healthy resort, and the exercise is almost necessary, for the intense cold would render the ordinary recreation of walking hardly endurable. To make twenty descents it is necessary to mount 2000 steps, being fifty for each tower, which is of itself a good day's work. The exciting sensation occasioned by the speed and the uncontrolled headlong impetus of the sledge will not admit of a description. It is, however, of that pleasurable nature that the anxiety to enjoy it is ever on the increase. Among other amusements of the season the English residents have started an ice-boat, in which they make excursions to Cronstadt and other spots in the Gulf of Finland. In fact the ice is traversed in all directions to these places by sledges; but an extraordinary look-out is kept, and little huts for the custom-house officers are thickly planted about to prevent smuggling.

In the absence of those excitements and popular amusements which exist in other countries, where the chilling power of the police does not interfere with the free exercise of expression and action, the least thing is turned to account in Russia, which will aid the passage of time. Thus, the closing and opening of the river are matters of great speculation, and considerable wagers are laid on these events; odds not unfrequently being

offered that they will occur on specific days, and even at certain hours of those days. As regards the opening of the river, it is made a matter of official ceremony; and, although there may not be a particle of ice visible in the stream, still no boat is allowed to be launched till the governor of the citadel has made his official report to the Emperor. He carries to his Majesty a cup filled with water from the Neva, and announces the freedom of the stream. The Emperor, after drinking the contents, returns the cup to the governor filled with ducats; and a gun from the citadel, proclaiming the completion of the ceremony, the river is almost instantaneously covered with boats. You must understand that space is one of the great evils of St. Petersburg, and thus the bridges are at very considerable distances from each other. A more direct communication between the two shores is therefore necessary, to provide which, swarms of ferry-boats are perpetually crossing.

I have to-day seen a practical exemplification of that grinding tyranny which I have attempted to describe in my former letters: it was so wanton and uncalled-for, that I was astonished, as much at the submission of one man, as at the despotic oppression of the other. A young, well-dressed man, apparently a student, had just engaged the only boat at the station to take him across the river, and he had scarcely seated himself when

an officer came down for the same purpose. To have taken his passage at the same time would have been the natural and ready course, but then the military despot could not have gratified that love of tyranny and exercise of authority which influence the conduct of every man in power towards his inferior; so he compelled the boatman to return to the quay, and ordered the young man to surrender his place and to leave the boat. To hear was to obey. I turned away equally disgusted at the base servility of the student, and the arbitrary violence of the officer: and yet this was only an epitome of the government itself. The Russians may call it "discipline," and believe what they assert; but it is nevertheless mental degradation and servile submission. And for what purpose? To attain power.

The ruling passion in the breast of every Russian is ambition; and in their attempts to gain their object, they submit to gross insult and the most galling humiliation. They have erected an earthly idol for their worship, and bow down before the political altar they have raised to him. Removed to an immeasurable distance from the power whom they glory to serve, they humiliate themselves, and yield to him an unqualified submission, in the hope of conciliating the authority which may place them in the position they aspire to fill. Russian "discipline" is servility under

false colours: the difference of the name does not alter the too notorious fact. Let the following example prove my assertion.

At a review at Warsaw the late Grand Duke Constantine wished to prove to some traveller of distinction the extraordinary state of *discipline* of the Russian troops. He dismounted, and, approaching one of his own generals, pierced his foot with his sword, coolly and premeditatedly, without offering a remark or alleging the slightest reason for the act. The general remained motionless, without uttering a complaint, and was carried off the ground when the Grand Duke withdrew from it. A civilian would have exercised the same stoicism, and, like the spaniel, would fawn upon the hand that struck him.

Prince Troubetzkoi is a convict in Siberia, for the share he took in the insurrection of 1824; and his family influence can obtain for him no relief, no mitigation of his sufferings: he is deprived of his name, and distinguished only by a number. He asks for permission to have his children educated, and to place them where they may have the benefit of medical treatment. But no: the sins of the father are to be visited on the children; for the imperial mandate has declared that the children of a galley-slave require no education. And the Troubetzkois are still courtiers, and constant in their homage and devotions to their imperial master.

I shall have occasion to return to the subject of Siberia at a future time, when describing the prison of the exiles at Moscow.

In England, two people rarely meet without passing some remarks on the state of the weather, and in Russia the opening topic is invariably on the temperature: "my thermometer is at 15° of cold, but they have 20° on the Vasilii Ostrof." The whole city is studded with thermometers; all the houses, and many windows in every house, exhibit them, screwed on to the outside of the window frames. If they do not influence the movements of the day, they entirely regulate the dress. A sailor at sea watches the dog-vane with no greater anxiety, than a Russian does his thermometer: but the cold is seldom so intense as to put a stop to the avocations of the people. When the cold of the atmosphere is below the freezing point of water, it seems to affect the fluidity of the air, and to produce long and steady calms, as if it froze the very wind itself. It is this winter calm, when the cold has set in, which makes it practicable to prosecute all out-door employments with facility. In lower latitudes, man could not endure the cold, though less intense; but the calmness of the air, induced by extreme cold, is a kind of natural safeguard, protecting animal life against its severity. In the calm of a degree of cold near the freezing point of mercury, the abstraction of heat from our bodies is going on much less rapidly, and

we are actually feeling less, and are less injured by the cold, than if we were exposed to a bleak wind, at a much higher temperature. A considerable expense was incurred, and great ingenuity displayed some few years since, in fitting up an apparatus for drying clothes on board the ships employed in the North Western expedition under Sir Edward Parry. This might have been spared, had the simple process adopted by the Russian washerwomen been known. They hang their linen in some place exposed to the air, leaving it to freeze. In a few days, when the power of the frost is lost, it becomes dry and perfectly flexible.

Although the winters are mostly very severe, and the thermometer falls from 20° to 25° below the zero of Fahrenheit, yet there are occasional exceptions, when the mercury hardly exceeds zero: these are called mild winters; however fierce such comparative mildness may appear to us. The absence of snow, that is of any material quantity, is of the utmost consequence to the comforts and industry of the people; from the suspension that it causes to all traffic on the roads, and to communication between the various towns and places. As regards the transport of provisions, this is almost a national loss, from the extreme suffering and distress occasioned by the ruin of the many thousands of persons engaged in the traffic.

In anticipation of the season, the most careful

preparations are made to meet its severity: in the houses the double window-sashes are fixed, stoves put in order, and the garrison as it were put into a state of defence. Without doors, the statues in the public places are wrapt round with matting, and encased in wooden frames, to prevent their being split or scaled off by the frost; and the poplar trees, which are not sufficiently hardy to resist the climate, and seldom attain to any height, are protected by coverings of straw and mats. A marked alteration now begins to be visible in the dresses of the people in the streets; few venturing abroad, excepting in fur cloaks and sheepskins.

The effect of a severe frost on the beards of the men, and the nostrils of the horses is very singular: they are literally fringed with icicles, formed by the congelation of the breath. At the same time, the wand of magic seems to have exercised its sportive influence, both in the city and the country. In the former, the vast Alexander column, and the peristyle of the Isaac's Cathedral: indeed, the whole building itself, which we had seen yesterday, presenting a deep contrast between the whitened surface of the ground and the dark red granite of the structure, are to-day resplendently white, and glittering as the purest marble. In the landscape, the branches of the trees have thrown off their leafless and monotonous appearance, and are encased with rime frost, two fingers

thick, glistening in the sun, and radiant with thousands of prismatic colours. It is a scene of enchantment, whose existence depends on a breath; as the least air destroys the fragile fabric, and dispels the illusion: such is the effect of the slightest evening mist.

The necessity of snow for the purposes of traffic, even in the city, is paramount, to enable the sledges to supersede the use of carriages; which latter, during the intensity of the frost, are well-nigh useless; for it often happens that the slightest stoppage becomes fatal to all further progress, by congealing the grease in the box of the wheel, and thus effectually arresting its revolution. Sledges swarm in the streets, and the absence of all noise presents a striking contrast to the din and rattle of wheels, to which the ear had previously been accustomed. Bells are forbidden; and thus, the foot passengers have to trust to their own vigilance, and to the reiterated cry of "pade, pade," from the isvostchik or driver, to escape from danger in crossing the wide streets. The foot pavements are admirably kept; being regularly swept and sanded after every fall of snow.

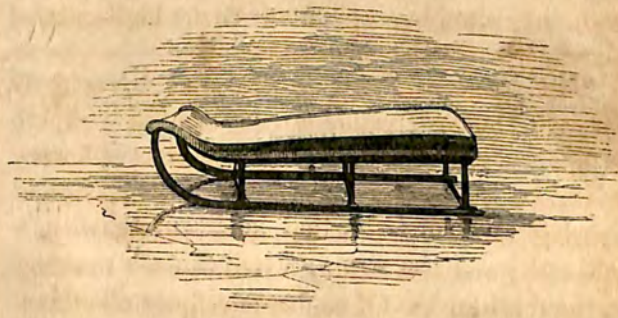
The public sledges are comfortable vehicles, holding two persons, with a large warm apron to cover them. The driver is seated in front with his legs dangling by the horse's tail. The motion is agreeable; but there is a great annoyance from the snow kicked up by the horse in its progress,

which plentifully besprinkles the riders. The private sledges are protected from this unpleasantness by having a gay-coloured net fastened to the saddle of the horse, and brought down to the angles of the sledge. The general effect of this, added to the rich dresses of the ladies, and the costly furs and silks which are piled around them, and the plunging speed of their high-mettled horses, is extremely pleasing.

The sledge of the Empress, who drives daily through the fashionable streets, is a most superb equipage: it is drawn by four magnificent horses, driven by a coachman bearded to the breast, and wearing the long blue national caftan, with a gold sash; and two richly dressed Cossacs standing on the footboard. Of course it eclipses all others. For the service of evening parties, or for nightly inclement weather, the bodies of carriages are taken off the wheels, and placed on runners; and the crevices of the windows being well stopped with strips of fur, the season is defied, and its gaieties enjoyed without risk or exposure.

The summer head-dress of a coachman (both public and private) is a very low crowned hat, ornamented with a large buckle in front; and in winter, the hat is supplanted by a crimson velvet four-cornered cap, bordered with fur. The blue caftan is still worn; but beneath it is a robe of sheepskin, with the wool turned inwards. It is

not at all an unusual thing to see the hats of the drivers of the public droshkys ornamented with peacock feathers, artificial flowers, or bits of old faded ribbon, stuck in the band.



LETTER VII.

Difficulties of the Russian Language. — Shop-signs and Inscriptions. — Separate quarters assigned to particular Trades. — Chemists regulated by the Police. — Striking instance of Russian Servility. — Banquet at a Russian Club. — Immorality of Society in Russia. — Prevalence of Gambling. — Foundling Asylum. — Boy Soldiers. — The Army the only source of Honours. — Pervading influence of Russian Despotism.

It is recorded of Cato, that he learnt the Greek language when he was eighty years old: a memorable example of perseverance; but I think Cato would have failed had he attempted Russian. To quote a Frenchman, whom I heard expressing his dismay at its difficulties, "c'est une langue impossible." It appears to embrace every possible combination of sound and accent; and, indeed, the Russians themselves attribute their facility as linguists to this cause. However, it is most certain that nothing but a lengthened residence in the country will ever conquer its accent, or master its idioms.

I have been amusing myself in my passage through the streets by reading the shop signs, to exercise myself in the characters of the Russian alphabet; and this led me to remark the extraor-

dinary mistakes the people make, by substituting one letter for another, when they attempt to announce their trade or avocation in either German or French. This is done very frequently; but on entering the shop in the hope of making yourself at last understood, you find the shopkeeper can speak neither the one nor the other. The cause of these mistakes is in some instances easily accounted for, in the difference of the character of the letters. The Roman p, for instance, is their r, and the c their s; but in other respects the orthography is vile. For example:

Salon pour la coup*er* des chev*aux* avec friseure.

Solon pour la coupe des cheveux avec frisu*pe*.

Handschuhmasher.

Germain wine cellar.

Vein cellar.

Verkauft alle geschlechten Brot (geschlechten means sexes).

Besides many others equally ridiculous.

The various trades are mostly distinguished by tabular representations affixed against the houses; by no means an unnecessary announcement where reading is not a universal accomplishment. Many trades, such as butchers, poulterers, &c. are carried on in quarters particularly assigned to them; and others, as drapers, clothiers, &c., occupy certain districts exclusively: an arrangement attended with much inconvenience, not only from the distance to be traversed to reach them, but

from the annoyance experienced by the competition and importunities of the parties. Method —if this extraordinary and Eastern custom of classing the trades can be called by such a name is an arbitrary interference with the comforts of the people. The tastes and refinements of civilised Europe have introduced some innovations, and to some extent revolutionised the national customs; but some few singularities, however, remain: such as the employment of men to make women's dresses, and the combined avocation, elsewhere obsolete, of the barber-surgeon. The estaminets and chemists are particularly under the direction of the police: the latter are restricted in number, and specially licensed; which is notified by an immense spread eagle, the national emblem, carved in wood and affixed over the door. The regulations enforced upon them are severe, and extremely inconvenient to persons who, like myself, may require their little travelling medicine chest to be re-furnished. In my own case I was peremptorily refused, unless I brought a regular prescription signed by a local physician. No law can be more effective for the prevention of the sale of poisons, nor more beneficial to the faculty, by annihilating all quacks and empirics, and thus compelling the sick to have recourse to the legitimate practitioner. I found a similar regulation in force in Denmark also. Legislation in trifles is one of the great evils of a despotic government,

and its jealous interference in all the transactions of life is its leading characteristic. The same love and assumption of the display of power, and of legislating for little things, distinguishes equally a democratic government. The two extremes resemble each other in many other points, but tyranny is the foundation of both.

Living in an artificial atmosphere, and under a continued though unseen state of surveillance, the Russians seldom venture on forming an opinion, and as seldom have the opportunity of expressing it. Recently, however, a case occurred, which, exhibiting their character in its true light, proves incontestably the national servility, and their abject fear of the authorities. The club originally established by the English, and still distinguished by their name, is principally composed of the Russian aristocracy and the most influential people; and admission is difficult, in consequence of the vast number of candidates, who are elected by ballot on the occurrence of vacancies. Tchernicheff, the minister of war, who is highly unpopular, on his name being put up, was blackballed by so large a majority that the greatest consternation was created among the balloting parties, who were principally military men. It could not have been a preconcerted plan, because no man would have ventured to have breathed his intention, on account of the certainty of being betrayed. The consequences, in this case, where

every name would be known, and retribution would certainly be meted out to the innocent as well as the guilty, led to a reconsideration of the vote; a new ballot was decided on, when, as if to prove the terror of 'discipline,' there was not one black ball. By such acts as these, worthy of the vassals of a Persian Satrap, the Russians rivet their own chains, and strengthen the bonds which their own servility has formed.

Besides this club there is one other called the Commercial; and, although public dinners are necessarily unknown in Russia, because no possible circumstance can occur to give rise to them, these two establishments celebrate their anniversaries by a public banquet. I was a guest on one occasion, and the description may amuse you. The bill of fare placed by my side was as follows:

Diner du 20 Decembre.

1. Potage à la tortue et à la Julienne.
2. Filet de Bœuf.
3. Soudaks et Truites de Gatchina.
4. Poulardes sautées aux truffes.
5. Aspèrges.
6. Punch glacé.
7. Roti, dindes et gelinottes.
8. Plum-pudding.
9. Dessert.
10. Glaces aux fruits et Meringues glacées.

Shortly before dinner was served, the whole party, numbering upwards of two hundred people, crowded into the ante-room for the 'whet;' when caviare, herring, salmon, ham and rein-deer's flesh, in a perfectly uncooked state, disappeared with marvellous celerity, and was topped by a glass of liqueur. The dinner being concluded, the chairman proceeded to give the toasts; these are previously determined upon, and each person is furnished with a printed list of them in Russian and German: the latter language being the one current for the day. They are limited, and given without the slightest preface or remark; but the din which ensued at each toast, from the noisy crash of a hundred military instruments playing an Imperial Salvo, the clattering of knives against glasses, and the thumpings on the table, is perfectly unbearable; fortunately there are but few toasts, or no human nerves could bear the discord. As a great proportion of the party is composed of foreigners, it must be the love of uproar and confusion, more than the spirit of enthusiasm, which actuates them. The toasts are sufficiently illustrative of the restrictions and ceremonious caution imposed even on the hour of mirth.—

1. To the health of his Majesty the Emperor.
2. To the health of her Majesty the Empress.
3. To the health of his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke, and all the Imperial family.
4. Prosperity to Russia.

5. Floreat Commercium.

There is no singing, nor, in fact, any thing to break the tedium of a cold and lifeless formality, till a general adjournment takes place to the other rooms, which are by this time thronged with ladies to take part in the ball, that terminates the evening.

It appears to be the custom of the English to remain for a short time after the chair has been vacated, to enjoy a few of their national habits and recollections. They appoint a chairman, and drink their own national toasts, and some few others, with the usual accompaniment of cheers. Attracted by the shouts, a circle of strangers is soon formed round them, to hear the speeches, and to witness this little display of national feeling. The "soll leben" of the Germans is the nearest thing which approaches to this; and they alone seem to understand it.

The power of despotism and the stability of the throne may be strengthened by cramping and disciplining the mind, by drilling it into a pedantic system of order and observance; but the result leads to a vicious and immoral social state. The forced and unnatural direction given to the ideas, in the true spirit of pedagogy, renders them ductile and passive to the will of the great ruler; who, assuming to himself the moral power and mental feelings of his people, permits only the exercise of reason, will, thought, and imagination in the

way he may point out and prescribe. But the human character cannot support this state of pupillage, this tree-like training, without falling back on some excitements which are free from arbitrary restrictions. Denied the advantages of rational amusement and of innocent social enjoyments, and deprived of those resources, which, while they dispel *ennui*, elevate the feelings, the mind resorts to sensual indulgences and the gratification of the passions, for the purpose of finding recreation and relief from the deadening pressure of despotism. Immorality and intrigue are of universal prevalence; and, in a social sense, are hardly looked upon as criminal acts, while gambling and debauchery are the natural consequences of the tedious monotony from which all seek to escape, by indulging in gross and vicious excitement.

The love of display and extravagance in dress are leading traits in the character of the higher orders, and show must be obtained at every sacrifice; but gambling is the prevailing pursuit, and it is a national vice in Russia. The favourite game is short whist, with Swedish points, the score of which may mount up to forty-four in a rubber; and, as no counters could suffice for so large a reckoning, the score is kept on the cloth of the table with chalk, and effaced when necessary by means of little brushes, with which each table is provided.

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The card manufactory is a privilege reserved to itself by the government, and the proceeds are devoted to the maintenance of the colossal Foundling Asylum: I say colossal, not because of its extent, (which, however, would justify the appellation,) but because of the number of children registered on its books: they amount, I am informed, to 15,000. These, you must understand, are not foundlings in the real sense of the term, but children (many of them illegitimate) placed there, either by the poverty of their parents, or their disinclination to rear them. A rapid increase of population is almost essential in Russia; not only on account of the great waste of human life, but from the thinly-peopled surface of the country; thus, while an asylum is offered to the helpless, a door is opened to immorality, and the repudiation of the most sacred of parental duties. The Emperor claims, in return for this privilege, the absolute disposal of the unfortunate beings thus thrown friendless on the world. What a revolting picture! A national vice is made subservient to the maintenance of a charitable institution; which, in its turn, offers a premium to profligacy, and to the unnatural abandonment of their offspring by parents. What is a mere paradox in this country, would be considered a flagrant abuse in others.

Some hundreds of these children are employed at the Imperial manufactory at Alexandrofski,

where I have seen them; and I can testify that their appearance, and the attention to their personal comforts, reflect the highest credit on the management of the governor, General Wilson. Their playgrounds are fitted up with a quantity of gymnastic apparatus; among which was a see-saw, at which they are uncommonly expert; standing on the ends of the plank, they spring into the air, at each oscillation, to a considerable height, descending with the most perfect aplomb on their feet, and giving the rebound to their companion; some of the girls, certainly, sprang up six or seven feet. If any of them show any particular talent for any of the sciences, they are immediately drafted off, and placed in the establishments connected with them for instruction; and thus, eventually, they are enabled to support themselves, although their services are never at their own disposal. The pressure of population in Russia will never be felt, nor cause the competition for work to be a source of poverty. The paucity of hands renders employment always easy of attainment, and the absence of children in the streets, proves that they are set early to some occupation.

It is not a little singular to meet such large numbers of boy-soldiers, dressed in every respect like the regular troops; there are several cadet schools, or corps, as they are called, where many hundreds of boys are trained to the military service

as officers. They are formed into regiments, and have to go through all the discipline and ordeals of the old soldiers; even to going into encampment in the summer, and putting up with some of the hardships of actual service. The poor urchins suffer in constitution by these precocious exertions, and many of them sink beneath the fatigue; but what is that to the Emperor, provided his system of discipline is upheld, and military ardour maintained.

As military rank is the only recognised distinction in the empire, even the birthright of honour is only titular, and confers no privileges until a certain military grade has been attained; it becomes, therefore, a matter of necessity, for those who have either pretensions or ambition, to enter the army. Here is another proof of the arbitrary power of the Emperor, and of his extraordinary aptitude in converting the tempers and ruling passions of his people to his own purposes. It is a novel idea to render the pride of high birth and illustrious descent dormant, and to compel the ambitious to serve an apprenticeship, before the rights and privileges of nobility, or the soaring spirit of ambition, shall be recognised. The army holds out too few inducements for men generally to enter it from choice; so that, while the conscription of the serfs fills the ranks with ease, a method equal to compulsion, is adopted to officer the countless host. The restraints of civil life are

absolute freedom, when compared to the rigid and martinet discipline of the Russian army. The most scrupulous attention to the most trifling minutiæ is exacted from all ranks of the military. A button awry, or the deviation of a hair in a point of regulation, are visited as offences of the highest degree; and the relaxation of laying aside the uniform is most imperatively forbidden. Weariness and disgust are the inseparable offspring of this system, and the endless monotony of its details burdens the mind with apathy, and an intolerable feeling of bondage.

The Russian, prone to gaiety and bonhommie, relaxes only when distance from his country loosens his restraints. It is said, that the Russian landing at Lubeck, is the most complete contrast to the one embarking; the one is about to re-enter his vast prison, while the other is experiencing the first sensations of unalloyed freedom and self-action. It has been my fortune to travel with some of these released captives, and it was quite amusing to witness the difficulty they felt in conforming to the easy and natural freedom, both in speech and manner, of those who surrounded them; the attempt, for some time, sat as ill upon them as their bourgeois costume. How extraordinary is the power, whose ascendency leaves the indelible imprint of subjection on the human mind, which, omnipresent, pervades man's whole nature; influencing his

thoughts and actions, and coercing him to yield an implicit obedience, even when removed from its empire. Truly has it been said, "Le pouvoir absolu, quand il est une vérité, troublerait, à la longue, la raison la plus ferme; le despotisme aveugle les hommes; peuple et souverain, tous s'énivrent ensemble à la coupe de la tyrannie."

LETTER VIII.

Different Classes of Society defined by Law.— Tiers Etat of Russia. — Their Privileges and Composition. — Native Merchants classed under three Guilds. — Foreign Merchants. — Native Peasantry and Colonists. — Discharged Soldiers. — Emancipated Serfs. — Tribes of other Nations. — Serfs of the Soil. — Condition and Treatment of Serfs. — Recklessness of the Feudal Lords. — Famine among the Serfs. — Peculation of a Minister of State. — Embezzlement of English Subscription for the Sufferers at Moscow. — Insurrection of Serfs. — Horrible Outrages. — Number of Serfs in Russia. — Taxes levied on them. — Exactions of the smaller Serf Owners. — Military Levy. — Custom of presenting Bread and Salt to the Emperor. — Asiatic character of Russian Costumes.

Among other singularities which distinguish this country is the law which not only defines the different classes of society, but also lays down the distinctions and privileges to which they are entitled. What we term the middle-class, or the gentry, is unknown, so that, in fact, no intermediate step between the nobles and the tiers état is recognised; but, as it is difficult to frame a word to meet the case, I will continue the appellation of tiers état; and it is, in truth, permissible, as by the Russian law the middling class is amalgamated with it. A merchant and a tradesman are held in the same

estimation by law, and differ only in the more extended privilege the one has over the other by the payment of his tribute or guild money; and thus the nobles and the military are the only gentlemen recognised by the state. I propose, at a future time, to give you an account of the former; but at present I intend to confine myself to the tiers état.

This class of society as it exists in Russia, is but little known beyond the limits of the empire. Schnitzler describes it at length, and as his details in a statistical sense are most correct, I shall quote largely from him. It is entirely different from anything of the kind in Europe in its construction, privileges, and restrictions; which are clearly defined by law, and most binding in operation. In England, and most of the other countries of Europe, the different grades of society of which it is composed are of a conventional character; wealth and superior intelligence entitling their possessors to stand in the first rank, while birth, unless connected with either of the former, maintains comparatively no position.

In Russia the tiers état comprises the whole class of society below the nobles and above the serfs; which latter form a class of themselves, and of a still inferior denomination. It is composed of two elements, namely, the inhabitants of cities, and a class of persons scattered through the provincial towns (poçad) and country places. The

first are comprehended under the name of citizen (mechtchanie), and the second as raznotchinsti, or people of various classes. The name mechtchanine, however, does not include in its strict sense the whole mass of citizens.

The citizens have several peculiar privileges; they raise their wives, however inferior they may have been, to their own rank; and transmit to their children the same rights they enjoy themselves. They require no licence to erect a manufactory, or to engage in any of the arts and sciences, and they may dispose of their property at pleasure. The law guarantees their persons, goods, and name, from all violence; and they cannot be mulcted of their fortune, nor deprived of their honour, excepting by a judicial sentence. They have their peculiar tribunals, where they are tried by their equals; they can hold real estate, and are exempt from all statute work imposed by the crown. Their towns have each a municipal seal, granted by the emperor; they may establish a town-hall, keep a paid secretary, and support a local fund or treasury. The letters patent, which are given to them on the establishment of their municipality, divides the inhabitants under the six following titles: the burgesses or ordinary inhabitants, the merchants of the three guilds, artisans of different sorts, foreign settlers or those from other towns, and the poçadski.

The eminent citizens form the first class, which,

independently of those who have filled the municipal office at different times, and have been elected at least twice as assessors of the town, or have been appointed to the magistracy by the government, comprises literary men, furnished with a diploma or certificate from a superior college; artists, being members of the academy of arts, or examined and recognised by it; private individuals possessed of at least 50,000 roubles; wholesale merchants who have no shop; and the owners of vessels. At the third generation, individuals of this class (who are even then far from being numerous) may obtain letters of nobility.

The merchants of the three guilds follow next: they and their families are exempt from every tax, excepting that which is levied on their capital; and they are not liable to military service. If brought to trial, assessors from their own class are associated with the usual judges of the town. At the sixth census, which was taken prior to 1829, their numbers were returned at 109,766; of which 17,134 belonged to the government of Moscow; 6970 to that of Saratof; 6673 to that of Tver; 5431 to that of Kalouga; 5341 to that of Koursk; 5200 to that of St. Petersburg; and 4812 to that of Vladimir. In the other governments their numbers are inconsiderable.

A merchant of the first guild, that is, one possessing a declared capital of at least 50,000

roubles, is in the enjoyment of considerable privileges. Independently of his dwelling-house, and of the manufactories he is at liberty to establish, he is permitted to have gardens and country-houses; but he may not own serfs. He may carry on any commerce, either home or foreign, without restriction, and may be a ship-owner. He is often created noble, and enjoys many of the privileges attached to that rank.

To be inscribed as a member of the second guild it is only necessary to declare to the capital of 10,000 roubles, and to pay the tax thereon. It gives the right to trading generally in the interior of the country, to establish fabrics, to keep inns, and to own boats. Like the merchants of the first guild, they are exempt from corporal punishment; but they may only drive two horses in their town carriage, and must confine that vehicle to a calèche.

The merchants of the third guild are taxed on a declared capital of 8000 roubles, and are otherwise assimilated to the other burgesses. They may carry on retail trades in the towns and country places; they may keep inns, and boats, and looms, and may frequent fairs and markets. This numerous class comprises people of all degrees beyond a state of bondage.

Foreign merchants, or settlers from other towns (intrannii, or invgorodnii gost,) form a separate class, and are also entitled to certain privileges.

Besides the free exercise of their worship, they have the right to be represented in the municipal councils, if they amount to 500 families, and any process which concerns them must then be pleaded in their own language. They may establish fabrics and manufactures, and trade without restriction. They are at liberty to quit the country on taking with them their families and goods, having previously notified their intention to the police of the district, and satisfied all demands of their creditors; and, finally, they must pay a three years' tax on their declared capital as a fine.

The Raznotchinsti, who comprise the class which cannot be included in the former, pay no head or poll tax, and are partially subject to the conscription. There is no certain return given of their number, but they are estimated at 3,000,000 souls.

The Poçadski, or inhabitants of the provincial towns and suburbs, may either be free men or serfs of the crown. Registered on their own application, they are licensed to open workshops, to keep public-houses, baths, and shops, to take contracts, and to take land on lease.

The Odnovortses, or proprietors of a single farm (Einhöfner, as they are called in Germany), are free peasants, who, possessing in their own right the land they till, are at liberty to take up other businesses, and to register themselves in any of the superior degrees. M. Ziablofski traces

their origin back to the Strelitzes, the children of the Boïars, and the Cossacks of the Stanitses, to whom crown lands were formerly distributed in lots, on which they built their houses, and maintain that they are partially descended from very ancient but extinct families. They are subject to military service and levies. It is principally in Little Russia that this commencement of rural freedom is to be met with. The number of Odnivortses is estimated at 10,000,000, of which the government of Koursk possesses 320,000, on a population of 1,500,000; and the government of Voronège 500,000 on 1,400,000 inhabitants. The peasants of the Baltic provinces are also free; but they are not entitled to own land. Thus the conquered provinces are subject to restrictions, which depress their energies and limit their freedom. Those in the north, which have been created and peopled at more recent periods, are altogether deficient in this class of the population, because the unthankfulness of the soil will not maintain them, while the germs of real and natural freedom exist only among the rural tribes and ancient people of Russia Proper.

The Iamtchiks form a tribe in which some ancient customs, and a few privileges, are still continued. They are exempt from all personal tax, and have the right to present themselves before the Emperor by deputation on certain oc-

casions. Their name, which belonged to an ancient Finnish race, implies in the present day the inhabitants of an Iame, or of a village, the male population of which is principally occupied in the transport of travellers and goods. There are many villages which have no other inhabitants than these carriers and drivers. In the government of Tobolsk alone there are 13,504 individuals of this class; in that of Smolensk 12,108; in that of Novgorod 8,353; and the total number, though incomplete, returned at the census before named, amounted to 80,015.

The colonists, who are numerous, particularly in the south and south-east of the empire, and are also to be found in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg, are principally Germans from Wirtemburg and the Grand Duchy of Baden. Their rural economy is far superior to that of the Russian peasants, to whom they might serve as models, and for which purpose they were first introduced by the Empress Catherine. Their villages, which are exclusively inhabited by them, are built in the German style, and in appearance, cleanliness, and comfort, present a marked contrast to the dark, unpainted log-houses of the Russians; and, true to the strong nationality of the Germans, they preserve their own language without any patois or admixture of Russ. Like them, the free peasants of Finland have never known slavery; but yet they are infinitely beneath

them, not only as regards their circumstances, but in intelligence and activity.

With respect to retired soldiers, who receive their discharge after twenty-two years' service, they often obtain the grant of a farm from the crown lands, and thus have the means in their latter days of realising a degree of independence and prosperity. These are, however, mainly attributable to their greater experience of the world, to the activity of mind inseparable from a long residence in camps, and to the comparisons they have been enabled to form, in their distant expeditions, between their own country people and foreign peasants. A great proportion of them, however, gain their scanty subsistence as porters and door-keepers to the great houses and public establishments.

Emancipated serfs are indebted for their freedom either to the generosity of their masters — of which many instances occurred during the reign of the Emperor Alexander — or to the purchase of it, which they themselves effect through the gains and savings of their services. But it is not compulsory on the master to accept this payment; and, as the price is discretional with him, he can affix it at such a rate that the object can never be obtained. There are many disgraceful instances known of masters having affixed a price, received the money, and afterwards refused the papers of manumission. These freedmen occupy themselves

as hawkers, as labourers on the public works, and as domestic servants, in preference to employing themselves as agriculturists or in sedentary pursuits.

Lastly, there may be reckoned among the free people whole tribes and nations, either subjected to Russia, or placed under its protection, and who, exempt from the conscription, furnish a certain contingent of troops, and sometimes a tax, in produce or kind. These are the Cossacs, the Kalmucks, the Bachkirs, the Vongoules, &c.; in the whole about two millions of males; but the period of their service does not exceed seven years. The Jews are heavily taxed, and have been liable to the recruiting system since 1826.

The last class is that of the peasants attached to the soil, and who are the property of their masters. They are sold together with the land, which is taxed in proportion to the number of serfs belonging to it. Each serf is estimated at from 700 to 2000 roubles, according to the value of the land he cultivates. In former times the emperors were in the habit of bestowing them by thousands on such of their favourites whose zeal and services they were desirous of rewarding; but in the present day, men are not included in gifts of this nature, which are confined to the land, without including the serfs upon it. The people of this class are for the most part poor and ignorant; but their easy and reckless humour,

the mildness and humanity with which they are often treated, the assistance which their masters are bound to afford them when either sick or in distress, and, consequently, the certainty of having wherewithal to subsist upon, render them much less miserable than would be supposed. They are, besides, under the protection of the laws: for, although a master can still inflict corporal punishment, he has no longer the power of life and death over his slave, nor can he banish him to Siberia without the sanction of the governor of his province. Some of them, by dint of labour, realise sufficient property to enable them to purchase the privilege of going free where they please, until summoned back by their masters; but it is more difficult to purchase their full liberty, as their masters often refuse the most tempting offers.

These feudal lords, however, are of extravagant and profligate habits, and occasionally harass their serfs with the most grinding oppression and extortion, while their neglect and inability to provide the stores and magazines directed by the government, reduce their serfs, in unpropitious seasons, to want and the most horrible sufferings of famine. This occurred to a frightful extent in the year 1840, in the governments of Toula, Riazan and Kalouga, when the people were driven for subsistence to the barks of trees. The summer of 1839 was so excessively hot that the parched

land yielded no produce, and that of 1840 was so cold and wet that the crops entirely failed. The consequence was, that the most dreadful distress prevailed, and thousands perished from starvation. When this reached the ears of the Emperor, he despatched one of his ministers with ample funds to afford relief to the sufferers, but the irresistible influence of the great national vice perverted this stream of benevolence. The minister returned from his mission, assuring the Emperor that the statement had been much exaggerated, handing over a portion of the funds which had been placed at his disposal. Other rumours, however, came to the Emperor's knowledge, and a fresh emissary was sent down, when the lamentable truth was disclosed, and proof adduced, that the minister had deceived his Imperial Master by a plausible tale; for, though, in fact, he had distributed some money, he had glossed over his iniquitous abstraction of a large proportion of the funds by returning a balance to the Emperor: his dismissal and disgrace confirmed the fact. This system is too prevalent, and the peculation is not considered dishonourable. It is a well-known fact that the large sums raised by subscription in England, for the relief of the sufferers by the burning of Moscow in 1812, were most shamefully misappropriated and plundered by the authorities to whom they were entrusted.

There is a prevalent opinion entertained by the

serfs that the Emperor is opposed to the system of serfdom, and would gladly abolish it. The crown serfs are certainly in a far better condition than the private ones, and suffer less from exactions; hence they are objects of envy to their less fortunate brethren. A misunderstood expression of the Emperor's to some private serfs, who besought him to add their territory also to some neighbouring acquisition which had just been made by the crown, was the consequence of a most horrible tragedy. Intoxicated with the belief that they might emancipate themselves, they organised a powerful conspiracy, and arming themselves, desolated the country around them with fire and sword; perpetrating horrors not to be exceeded by the sanguinary scenes of St. Domingo, and the worst days of the French revolution. It is stated that they cut off the legs and arms of their victims, beating them to death with the mutilated members, and stifling their dreadful cries by thrusting the mangled feet into their mouths. Human nature in its semi-civilised state must be softened, the mind enlightened and made fully to understand its responsibilities, and its obligations to society, before it can appreciate the real blessings of freedom; for a sudden reaction inevitably produces the most calamitous results. Unbridled licentiousness and the most extravagant excesses are the natural ebullitions of semi-barbarians, excited by mistaken ideas of freedom, as opposed

to the principles of submission to laws and constituted authorities. Freedom is a ferocious animal, unless governed by reason, and made amenable to the public safety. To name political liberty to a people who would compromise its sacred character by their means of attaining it, would be to destroy its existence and to establish anarchy in its place. Should this event ever occur in Russia, revolution and massacre would spread with the speed of lightning through the land.

There are about 18,000,000 of male serfs scattered throughout Great Russia, the Polish provinces and Old Finland: in New Finland slavery has never been known; in the Baltic provinces it has been abolished within the last few years; and in Little Russia the peasants are mostly free.

The peasants attached to the soil are either serfs of the crown or of private individuals. The latter, amounting to 10,411,753 males, increase more in proportion to the former, whose condition, nevertheless, is more easy and less precarious. The crown serfs are treated by the government with the utmost indulgence; yet it was found that, in the interval between the last two censuses, their number had considerably decreased; while the returns of the private serfs showed a considerable increase. Both classes are employed, without distinction, either as labourers, mechanics, or miners. They reside in wretched villages, in a state of

rude simplicity, which recalls powerfully the first condition of man; and even their food savours strongly of their ignorance and destitution. The government fixes summarily, both as to time and manner, the number of recruits it may require from among the two classes; and it is estimated that a levy of six men on a thousand will produce a corps of 250,000 men. The crown levies a tax on its own peasants, which varies according to the necessities of the state; but the usual average is five roubles annually: it also exacts an aggregated sum from the private serfs, which their master is compelled to pay; reimbursing himself afterwards at his own pleasure. The amount of this assessment depends entirely on the will of the noble; but the ordinary sum enforced is about ten roubles yearly. The large proprietors of serfs realise an immense income from this capitation tax: they create, besides, another great source of revenue, which is called the obrok; that is, the annual payment of a stipulated sum by the peasants for permission to engage themselves either in trade or domestic service, and to absent themselves from the district for the space of three years. This sum may be estimated at from thirty to fifty roubles in ordinary cases: but with the small serf owners there are no limits to their exactions, as they attempt to wring every hard-earned kopeck from the already necessitous wretch. A servant in the house at which I have

been residing here is one of these unfortunates: for his mistress possessing only six serfs, and her weekly visits of extortion becoming so annoying, it has been arranged that the man shall never draw his wages but in small sums, on purpose to defeat her tyranny.

The military levy does not appear to be so distressing to the serfs of the interior as to the peasants of the Baltic provinces, who endeavour to the utmost to screen themselves from it: it deprives them of nothing of what they may possess, and the duties it imposes on them are not more severe than those from which they are removed; and, besides, it emancipates them as well as their future offspring. It is true it breaks those links which have already been formed; and it is melancholy to see that the masters look more to their own interests, in the compulsory surrender of their slaves, than to the necessities and situation of those who are at their mercy.

These details will give you a more comprehensive idea of the state of society and of the position of the people than any other description I could offer you; and it explains, besides, the minute forms of government over this almost nomad race.

A highly singular custom prevails throughout Russia in the presentation of bread and salt to the Emperor or Empress on their first visit to any town, as a symbol of the loyalty and homage of the inhabitants. It may possibly be of Eastern

origin; where the partaking of these articles renders the person of the guest sacred, and safe from treachery. The bread and salt are contained in a salt-cellar and plate of gold, which appear to be carefully preserved; for in the Imperial treasury in the Kremlin at Moscow, there are a great number which belonged to former emperors; and in the winter palace at St. Petersburg there is even a greater display of tributes to the present Emperor, arranged in glass cases on the walls of the private apartments.

The genuine Russians evidently partake much more of the Asiatic than of the European in their costume: the men among the lower classes universally wear the beard, in defiance of all the attempts to abolish it, from the time of the rigorous decree of Peter the Great to the milder efforts of the present sovereign. The hair is worn long in front; and by the labouring classes is confined by a thin fillet of leather; but it is shaved from the back of the head, almost in a line with the top of the ears. The ordinary costume consists of a blue or pink shirt worn over the trousers, which are tucked into the boots reaching nearly to the knee; and a blue caftan, or robe, fitting close to the neck and falling to the ankles; or a sheepskin coat of the same fashion worn, with the wool either in or out, according to the season, and bound round the waist with a red sash. The women in general only bind their heads with pieces

of silk or linen, put on with less taste than the French toque; and some, especially those from the provinces, wear as a head-dress a kind of coronet, five or six inches high in front and lower behind, enriched either with pearls or gold lace; others have a kind of cap fitting close to the head, and composed of a net-work of pearls; a long spencer of the most gaudy colours reaching to the hips, and lined with fur, with collar and cuffs of the same material, and gathered in at the waist in large plaits, forms her holiday dress.

LETTER IX.

Fire at St. Petersburg. — Fire Police. — Destruction and Confusion at a Conflagration. — Vastness the Bane of Russia. — Police Regulations. — Russian Fire Insurance Companies. — Foreign Insurance prohibited. — Hollow Civilisation. — Feeling of Restraint. — Rapacity, Villany, and Perverseness of Policemen. — Knavery of Officials. — Adroitness of Thieves. — Demoralising Effects of Despotism.

I HAVE just witnessed a fire; and, as in other things, the want of simplicity in the arrangements and the over-crowding them with useless discipline, render all attempts to extinguish the flames difficult, if not almost abortive. This kind of calamity is less destructive than in former times; brick buildings having generally been substituted for the wooden ones which originally composed the city; but still the utmost precautions are taken, and a most vigilant watch maintained.

St. Petersburg is divided into several districts, or quarters, each of which has its separate establishment of police, termed a siège: this is generally a building of considerable extent, surmounted by a tall wooden tower, on the summit of which two watchmen patrol, day and night, to give the alarm of fire; which their commanding position enables them at once to detect. By pulling a string, communicating with a bell in the yard below, in

which a full complement of engines is kept, the firemen are apprised of a fire having broken out.

Should the fire be in another district, the exact spot is at once pointed out by means of a telegraphic communication between the different sièges; namely, by balls suspended by day, and by lanterns suspended at night, at various angles, from an iron frame on the tower. Thus far nothing can be more perfect; and the clearness of the atmosphere, unsullied by smoke, facilitates the duty of the watchmen. The engines are numerous, as are also the men appointed to them; but the former possess but little power, and the latter, though daring to a fault, act without the knowledge of the commonest principles, breaking,

for instance, every pane of glass throughout the house, to enable them, as they say, to see where the fire is, and thus increasing the flames by admitting a free current of air. Furniture is not removed, but is thrown bodily out of the windows, — mirrors, piano-fortes, pictures, and the first things they lay their hands on, come crashing into the street; where their destruction is speedily consummated by the rolling of the water carts, the plunging of the horses, and the violence of the men. From the situation of the city no water can be obtained excepting from the river and the canals; to each engine, therefore, are attached several barrel carts, drawn by two horses, which plying between the place for water and the engines, are pumped full by hand at the one spot, and emptied by the suction of the engine at the other. The bustle and confusion arising from the violent driving of the carts, the backing of the horses and the plunging and terror of the beasts, added to the rushing of the men here and there are indescribable. The brand major, the minister and chiefs of the police, the commandant and civil governor of the city, and sometimes even the Emperor and his son, hasten to the spot to direct the operations; and besides, a large body of soldiers is drawn up at the principal avenues, to prevent any intrusion of the people. The display of force appeared to me to be so over proportioned to the exigencies of this, or indeed of any other case, short of a general conflagration, that I have been

at some trouble to learn the exact extent of it when in action. Each siège despatches two engines, carrying twelve men, a carriage with thirteen others, four water carts and a truck full of ladders and fire-hooks: there is also a reserve, sent from the head quarters, of three engines, fourteen water carts, six carriages conveying firemen, and one for the hooks. This minute enumeration of the forces collected is sufficiently indicative of the preçautions taken against conflagration; but it as clearly proves that the system is too crowded to be very effective, and too large to be easily manœuvred.

Vastness is the rock on which every thing seems to split, and so that it can be maintained, utility is disregarded. Territory without population; navies without seas; the simplest details of business so overloaded with forms and ceremonies, and the public duties so encumbered with *employés,* that all unite in hampering and checking the progress of the empire. Such is the state of things in Russia. Facility and perspicuity are mere fancies of the mind, and utter impossibilities under the present organisation of the government.

I shall now describe to you, as I proposed, the position and privileges of the various classes of the nobles; and you will then perceive how perfectly impossible it is to effect any change in the system, even if the people were less wedded to it, or aware of its disadvantages. The foundation of the evil lies in the upholding the *chinovniks,*

an inferior class of nobles, whose pride prohibits them from entering into business, and who are thus placed in crowds in the public offices, and weigh like an incubus on the state. They, and the senseless multiplications of unnecessary forms and details, are like clogs to the wheel, and impede the progress of the huge machinery of the state.

Wooden houses, with very few exceptions, are to be met with only in the outskirts of the city, where the effects of fire are most to be dreaded; and there the police compel the inhabitants to keep on the roofs of their houses a mop and a large tub of water for any exigency of the kind!

In the villages every inhabitant is bound to provide some implement or utensil necessary in subduing a fire, and these, as the houses are invariably of wood, and there are no engines, are of the most varied kinds. To accommodate the unlearned, and to show at once where these articles are to be had, pictorial representations of them are affixed over the doors — rude enough in their execution, but still they sufficiently represent saws, axes, buckets, ladders, &c.

One of the great drawbacks to real improvement in Russia is the sanction given to monopolies, or, as they are jesuitically called, privileges; they are restrictions to competition, and extremely oppressive and arbitrary in their character. There are at present only two fire-insurance companies in St. Petersburg: the first of these, on obtaining

its patent, or privilege, refused all policies excepting those of the common kind, leaving those which we term hazardous without the means of protecting themselves. As this company resolutely adhered to this determination, the Emperor permitted the formation of another company; but it is only allowed to entertain the policies which the other declines. This legislating for petty things, this stooping to minutiæ, seems beneath the attention of a great mind; but the principle of government in Russia, like the proboscis of the elephant, accommodates its power to every possible conjuncture.

In his anxiety to prevent the investment and expenditure of money beyond his dominions, the emperor has fallen into the short-sighted policy of prohibiting the effecting of insurances in foreign countries; although the recent example at Hamburg, where so large an amount of English capital was poured in to cover the insurances effected in London by the Hamburgers, is a sufficiently convincing proof of the wisdom of throwing the risk on another country, and thus replacing the losses from extraneous sources.

As the older nations of Europe have risen to prosperity, or have at least mantained their position, by painful struggles and long and dear-bought experience, it would be natural to suppose that more recent people would take advantage of the circumstance, and, anticipating experiment, would

at once select the best of those points and institutions which had received the approbation of time, and adapt them to their own necessities, instead of beginning almost at a state of nature, when they might at once have passed over the season of childhood into mature age. It was this advantage that the early inhabitants of the world had over our first parents, in availing themselves of the slight experience and knowledge they had gained, instead of toiling upwards from the mists of ignorance of the infant world, and successive generations have in each descent improved on the experience of the past.

Russia occupies at this moment the two extremes; and, to use a homely saying, it has attempted to run before it can walk. A forced attempt at civilisation has left the lower classes in a condition of semi-barbarism, while the upper ones are in an artificial state, and unimbued with those refinements and elegancies which form its charms and delight.

If the feeling of restraint is so powerful on one as a stranger, its effects must be still more potent on the Russians themselves: habit may to an extent reconcile them to the chain, but they can never lose sight of it; for, like the tethered ox treading on its links, they are momentarily recalled to a sense of their bondage. This obtrusive feeling haunts them like a spectre, or confronts them at every turn in its visible reality — proclaiming, even

through the wretched subordinates of power, the presence of the despot.

Protruding on the pavement, in most of the public thoroughfares, stands a small chequer-painted wooden house, about twelve feet square, which is, at the same time, the residence and post of three policemen, one of whom is always on guard at the door, carrying a huge long-handled axe as an emblem of his authority. Dressed in a uniform of dirty grey, and fed at the expense of the government, his life may be said to be passed like that of a dog chained to its kennel. They are a worthless race; and, as their miserable pay does not exceed one pound a year, they live notoriously on the public by exactions and crime. They take toll of every wood-cart that passes them, by extracting several billets, and exact money from the dvorniks, or yard-servants of their district, by threatening to report them for neglect in sweeping the streets. In solitary spots it is not always safe to pass within their reach, as murder and robbery are deeds perfectly familiar to them. A notorious culprit of this class was discovered in one who had his post on one of the canal bridges, and who coolly acknowledged, on one murder being traced home to him, that he had committed twelve others. Acting up to the letter of their instructions, *au pied de la lettre*, when placed on any particular duty, their brutal ignorance, added to the fear of using the slightest

discretion under any extraordinary circumstances, lead them to the exercise of the most absurd and tyrannous authority. Stationed at particular outlets of the quai, while the frozen surface of the river is considered unsafe, and before the bridges are replaced, they are ordered to allow no one to pass. Some venturesome individual, cut off from his home, or whose pressing business may require him on the other side, passes over from some unguarded spot, and attempts to land: but no, he is thrust back; for the order must be obeyed, although it meant that no one should pass the policemen to gain the river. Thus a fresh danger must be incurred by recrossing, or a desperate dash be made at some more fortunate and less guarded spot. When the ice has acquired some degree of consistency, a platform of boards is laid across the river for the accommodation of the public; but it is not allowed to be crowded; and even that regulation is as usual a cause of useless oppression and tyrannical authority. A funeral with its few attendants (it was that of a poor man) sought the passage on its way to the cemetery; but its progress was prohibited. The party carried their melancholy load to a further distance down the river, beyond the presence of the police, and attempted to cross on the ice. It was unequal to their weight, and both the living and the dead found the same grave, and were carried beneath the ice. The risk was permissible, because the

police were not directed to watch that quarter, and their duty limited them to prevent drowning only at particular spots; elsewhere, as in the instance mentioned, wholesale destruction might occur without an attempt at prevention. The absurdity, however, has been paralleled in the city of London, in the caging over the top of the monument.

But, independently of the natural villany of these men, and their instigation to crime from poverty, they are led on in their career by the example of their superiors. In my own district a case recently occurred, which was a matter of public conversation, as far as people dared to give utterance to the tale. It appears that a rich Moscow merchant fell dead in the street, and was promptly carried to the police station, where, on being searched, a large sum, stated to be 80,000 roubles, was found upon him. His relations, on being apprised of his death, made every inquiry as to the money, which they knew he had with him, but in vain. At length a suspicion became attached to the major of the siège, from his having launched out into a more costly style of living; and eventually he was detected in paying into the bank some government bills, which were known to have belonged to the deceased. He was immediately suspended and placed under close arrest, in the full expectation of every one that a signal punishment awaited him; but, to the

surprise of all, he was shortly reinstated, and the whole affair hushed up, which was doubtless effected by the payment of a handsome bribe to those under whom he held his office.

A man must be more than a Russian to withstand the temptations which are put in his way, and which, under the protection of his office, he has so many ways of turning to account; and besides, his natural ingenuity and finesse never leave him at a loss for new schemes.

Among other regulations of the police is a very stringent one with respect to casualties arising from people being run over or trampled on by carriages and horses in the streets. There is no restriction as to speed, and it is therefore surprising, considering the vast number of carriages circulating in the streets, and the terrific pace at which they are driven, that so few accidents occur. The penalty exacted by the police is no less than the entire forfeiture of the vehicle and horses, the value of which is supposed to go to the sufferer: but it is a mere hypothesis, for, as the chiefs of the different sièges have the authority to provide horses for their fire-brigades, they find an easy market for the forfeited cattle. The Emperor has been known to descend from his carriage and to abandon it to the police after it has been the cause of an accident; doubtless in the full belief that he was making a reparation to the party injured.

The vigilance of the police is altogether inefficient

in checking the career of the light-fingered gentry, who yield to none in Europe in adroitness and finesse; and who, if detected by their intended victims, are generally allowed to escape, on account of the annoyances and difficulties experienced in bringing them to justice. Summary punishment, in the shape of a smart caning, is the one most often resorted to; which ceremony, instead of collecting a crowd, generally clears the street, for the penalty of being compelled to attend as a witness is almost as great as having to appear as a delinquent. Recognizances are unknown; and thus, to secure the presence of a witness, he is not unusually kept in confinement, to be produced when necessary.

The following device for passing stolen property in the streets without losing time, and to avoid the risk of its being found on the thief if captured, is novel, to say the least of it; and its discovery was the result of a mere accident: — A gentleman buying a cap, selected one of an unusual shape from the hatter's counter, and after much haggling purchased it; although it had been made to order, and the party for whom it was intended was expected to fetch it momentarily. To secure it, the gentleman put it on his head, and departed. In the course of his walk he found in his pocket a snuff-box which did not belong to him, and which he knew was not there a short time before; he could not account for it: presently

he drew forth a strange handkerchief, and shortly afterwards he found himself enriched with a pocket-book. Suspicious of these additions to his property, he determined to stroll leisurely about to watch the result; and at length, from the quantity of things placed softly about his person, he became convinced that he was converted into an ambulatory receiver of stolen goods, of which the cap was the sign. He at once made the discovery to the police, who were not long in turning the information to account.

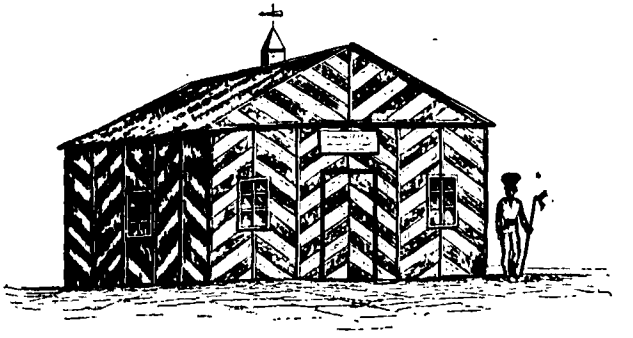
I cannot resist adding the following anecdote, on account of the extraordinary coolness and knowledge of life displayed by the principle performer: — A military man was making some purchases in a shop, and while there a well-dressed person walked in, who, from his manner, seemed to be a companion of the customer; this seemed to be further confirmed by his taking from off the counter the pocket-book of the officer, whose head was averted, and leaving the shop, after making an intelligent sign to the shopkeeper to enter into the apparent joke. The book was soon missed, and the shopman pointing round the door, said, "Your friend took it; he is outside." It is almost needless to add, that it was a well-executed theft. I myself lost a valuable silver snuff-box, which was taken out of my pocket by a nurse with a child in her arms, who passed me while I was standing during a

shower of rain in the passage of a house talking to a friend. No other person went by us; and we both remarked that it was odd that she should go out and expose her child to the weather.

Where there is no excitement to virtue, there is no feeling of self respect; but, on the contrary, a total callousness to the disgrace of being suspected. There is no scope for the expression of the finer feelings, and thus a general apathy of the mind prevails; indeed real moral worth cannot exist under the predominating system of peculation and fraud, which characterises the whole country, and enters even into the details of private life. Charge them and reproach them as you will, still resentment finds no room in their breasts; and they will submit to humiliation and degradation without a murmur, or an attempt at defence. Kindness and good words are not only lost upon them, but are sure to be taken advantage of by deception, and by practising on the easiness of your temper: sternness, severity, and promptness are natural to them, and can alone command respect and ensure good conduct.

This is a sad picture of the human race, but it is literally true; and it shows how complete is the subjugation of the mind under the withering influence of a despotic power, descending step by step from the Emperor to his lowest subordinate, and increasing in rigour at each stage of its progress. It appears incredible that the minds

of men deprecating this system, and aware of its deep humiliations, should, chameleon-like, take their colour from the things around them, and feel the stern necessity of assimilating their conduct to that of the overbearing and severe disciplinarian they are associated with. A few days since I imagined that I had suddenly lost my handkerchief; and perceiving a man close upon my heels, I immediately seized him and taxed him with the theft: he denied it; and, although to all appearance a respectable man, I dragged him into a doorway and searched him. I blushed at my own violence, and felt how impossible it would have been to my disposition to have acted thus elsewhere; for although I am satisfied that the man entertained no idea of having been insulted, I felt it for him.



LETTER X.

Privileges of Russian nobility.—Orders and decorations: of St. Andrew; St. Alexander Nefski; St. Anne; St. George; St. Vladimir; St. Catherine.—Profusion of crosses and medals.—Tact of the Emperor in bestowing decorations.—His title and power.—Titles of Count Essen.—The Russian empire a vast Dionysian ear.—System of espionage established by Count Benckendorf.—Hollowness and instability of the Russian Government.

NOBILITY in Russia, as elsewhere, is by descent and by creation; but the former, as I have before stated, is titular only, unless accompanied by a certain military rank. The same style and title descends to every son; and although the number of princes and counts in a family may thus be very great, yet they are mostly mere patronymics. The restriction as to privileges is thus rather advantageous, since it corrects to some extent the preponderating influence of their class by reducing the numbers of the feudal lords.

The privileges which they possess are peculiar, and clearly defined by law. They cannot be deprived of their honours, their property, nor their lives, but by a verdict; they can only be tried by their peers, and the sentence of death recorded

against them must be confirmed by the senate and sanctioned by the Emperor; they are not amenable to corporal punishment, even when serving as common soldiers; they are exempt from all kind of service, unless they be sentenced to it for some serious offence; they are at liberty to enter into the service of a foreign power, provided that state be at peace with their own; if they prefer serving in Russia they may obtain their discharge immediately on making the demand; they can dispose of property acquired by themselves on the sole condition of conforming to the law of hereditary descent; the goods and possessions of a degraded noble cannot be confiscated, but are restored to his family; they may establish fabrics, manufactories, towns and markets, on their estates; their dwellings are exempt from the billets of soldiers; they may sell all their produce wholesale, and the treasure and mines which their lands may produce belong to them without any interference from the state. In the Baltic provinces, where the nobles have preserved some of their feudal rights, no person of an inferior class can exercise an ownership in the soil.

The daughter of a noble marrying a foreigner loses all right to her inheritance, which, if she be the only child, passes to the next heir.

The enumeration of the various orders and decorations may be rather tedious, but there

are some curious historical facts connected with them, and they throw a great light on some of the customs and observances of the court.

Independently of the order of Malta, or of St. John of Jerusalem, which was re-established in Russia when the Emperor Paul constituted himself its grand master in 1798, there are five other orders of chivalry, each of which has its chapter; and the whole are placed under the control and management of the grand chancellor of the orders of the empire.

Peter I., after having put down the insurrections promoted by the guards of the Strelitzes in 1698, founded the first order which was known in Russia. It was that of St. Andrew the Martyr, whom the Russians consider to be their tutelary Saint. Count Gollovine, grand chancellor and grand admiral, was the first knight of the order. It has only one degree; but the diamond cross of the order is considered a special distinction, and this equally applies to all the other orders: it is particularly the distinction of the Imperial family, and the Emperor passes the collar belonging to it round the neck of the empress after having crowned her.* The badge represents the figure of the Saint, which hangs from a blue enamelled cross surmounted by a crown: the reverse represents an eagle displayed with an inscription

* This ceremony is performed by the Emperor himself.

bearing the name of St. Andrew; and on the eagle these words are emblazoned, *Za verion i vernosti* (pour la fois et la fidelité). The cross is worn with a blue ribbon, and the collar consists of the St. Andrew cross and a crown placed alternately.

The establishment of the order of St. Alexander Nefski, surnamed the faithful or believer (*blagovernii*), goes back also to the time of Peter the Great; but it was the widow who, in fact, founded it in 1725. It has also only one degree. Its emblem is a red enamelled cross with golden eagles, and the figure of the Saint on horseback in the centre, bearing the inscription, S. A. (St. Alexander) et principibus patriæ. This decoration, which all the knights of St. Andrew are entitled to wear, is worn with a scarlet ribbon.

The order of St. Anne belongs especially to the house of Holstein Gottorp, the present reigning family, and was founded in 1736 by the Duke Charles Frederic, who was naturalised in Russia when the unhappy Peter III. ascended the throne of his father Peter Alexeievitch. There are four classes, and even a fifth, which is given to soldiers distinguished for their bravery. The ribbon is red, with a yellow border, supporting a red enamelled cross, which is worn according to its rank, on the sword, at the button-hole, round the neck, or on the breast.

The order of St. George, founded by the Em-

press Catherine II. in 1769, is the only purely military order. It was restored by the Emperor Alexander on his accession to the throne, and enjoys the highest consideration. It has four classes, the last of which is conferred without distinction on all military men of the rank of officer who have been twenty years in the service, and have borne an irreproachable character; but to obtain the distinction of the first class, it is necessary to have gained a battle, and to have saved the empire; and unless the Emperor himself shall have performed these conditions, he is not entitled to wear it. It is a cross of white enamel, bearing the escutcheon of St. George, and hangs from a yellow and black striped ribbon. Common soldiers receive a small silver cross attached to a ribbon of the same colour after twenty years' service.

The order of St. Vladimir is both civil and military, and is divided into four classes. It is considered an honourable distinction, and consists of a deep red enamelled cross fastened to a scarlet ribbon bordered with black. It was founded by Catherine II. in 1782, and was restored by the Emperor Alexander in 1801.

All these orders, to which pensions were formerly attached, possess their statutes, and confer the rank of nobility on their wearer; excepting in the inferior classes, which, with some decorations of a temporary nature, are conferred on the common

soldiers. Among the last, may be reckoned the decoration given by virtue of the Ukasse of August 22. 1828, to public functionaries for irreproachable conduct; the medal for the campaign of 1812; that for the fall of Paris, in 1814; and many other marks of distinction accorded to individuals, under various titles and in different forms. It requires some management to display the number of little crosses and medals which adorn the breasts of the common soldiery; for six is no uncommon number, and eight and ten occasionally occur. A piece of tin or copper of proportionate length, according to circumstances, is attached to the left breast, with the different distinctions hanging from it in a row, and with the colour of the ribbon peculiar to each painted upon it. A large gold medal of the Emperor, worn round the neck, is not at all unusual among the mercantile classes, who receive it as a reward for some invention or spirited undertaking. Clerks and functionaries in public offices, as well as military men, are entitled to a kind of buckle, bearing on it a number denoting how many years they have served beyond ten, and increasing quinquennially.

There is, besides, the order of St. Catherine, peculiar to ladies, which was founded by Peter to commemorate the services of the Empress in his war against the Turks. It has two classes; the decoration represents the figure of the saint, and a

nest of eaglets on a hill, at the foot of which are two eagles holding serpents in their beaks, and it is worn with a scarlet ribbon bordered with white. It bears as a motto "Æquat munera comparis." The Empress is Grand Mistress of the order, and confers it on the most distinguished ladies of her court; some of whom, who receive in addition the distinctive honour of Her Majesty's miniature in enamel, to be worn on the shoulder, are called the Ladies of the Portrait. In the month of January, 1829, the Emperor founded another order, in honour of the Virgin Mary, for the purpose of recompensing the irreproachable services of women, and particularly those connected with schools and public establishments. The first class is bestowed on those who shall have served without reproach for at least twenty-five years, whereas fifteen are sufficient to constitute a claim for the second. The decoration consists of a blue enamelled cross, ornamented with a garland, and bearing the initials of the late Empress, Marie Fœdorovna.

The class of the Chinovniks I leave for the moment, as their peculiarities will be more in place when speaking of the regulations connected with commerce.

The above detail shows that inducements enough are held out to virtue and good conduct; and, as it is more singular to find a man undecorated than covered with distinctions, it would appear that it is more difficult to lay the finger on an unmeritorious individual, than to load the de-

serving with distinctions. It is a cheap way of compensating for miserably paid service: pride in the reward would lose its value with other people, from the profusion with which it is bestowed, but here, where nearly all are decorated, the absence of the emblems seems to imply disgrace and neglect, and they are thus prized accordingly. The Emperor, who is a proficient in his art, knows how to excite public enthusiasm, and to stimulate the devotion of the soldiery; and thus seizes occasions to make public demonstrations of his favour. I saw him once, after a review of his guards, about 60,000 strong, order the whole of the corporals of the force to form a hollow square on the parade ground; and, having entered it and harangued them on their duties and the discipline of the men, he distributed largely among them, with his own hand, a variety of crosses and medals. There were at least two thousand of these men, and there was not one that did not leave the presence elevated in his own estimation, and more zealous in his devotion to the Emperor.

Where the government is vested in one individual, who assumes the whole responsibility, without allowing any portion of his functions, or any actual interference in state affairs, to be exercised by his ministers, these public exhibitions, and this identification of himself with the popular feelings, become an absolute necessity in order to prove the reality of his power. The representative and

delegated authority of a constitutional monarchy, permits the sovereign to enjoy some ease and retirement; but activity, personal superintendence, and public display, can alone maintain order and discipline in a despotic state: they are the penalties which the ruler must pay for the security of his authority. The expression of Napoleon, "Moi, je suis l'état," explains in a word, not only what the sovereign assumes, but what the people are to follow. We have hardly a word in our language which gives the meaning of the title the Emperor adopts and prefixes to all his public acts. *Samodergtsa*, or *Selbstherrscher* the German term, is tolerably comprehensive of the expression I have just quoted of Napoleon; and implies, indeed, somewhat more; for the strict translation is "Self-governor"—appointed by myself and of myself. We have only to consider that this authority extends over a third of Europe and sixty millions of inhabitants, to feel the enormous power wielded by one man, and to wonder at the subjugation asserted by his title and acknowledged by his subjects. This title comprises every other, and requires no additions to aggrandize the man; but not so with the important personages beneath him. Count Essen signs himself thus: "General of Infantry of His Imperial Majesty my Most Gracious Master, Councillor of State, Military General Governor and Civil Director of St. Petersburg, Knight of the High Orders of St. Andrew, St. Alexander Nefski with brilliants, Grand Cross of the First Class of

St. Vladimir, of the White Eagle, of the Third Class of St. George, of the First of St. Anne, also Grand Cross of the Royal Prussian Order of the Red Eagle, and Possessor of a Golden diamond-mounted Sword, the reward of bravery, and of the Medal for the year 1812. COUNT ESSEN."

I am reminded of an expression I once heard in France, "Les decorations ne font pas l'homme, c'est l'homme qui fait les decorations." But after allowing something for national and excusable vanity, the *fanfaronnade* of Count Essen is only equalled by the Eastern bombast of "Brother to the Sun," "Uncle to the Moon," &c. In his capacity of governor of St. Petersburg the Count Essen possesses very great powers, equalled only by those of Count Benckendorf, the head of the secret police, over which department he presides with the address and subtlety of a Fouché, having under his command a strong mounted force of gendarmerie, besides an infinity of unknown agents.

The Russian walls have more than ears: the whole country is, in fact, a Dionysian Ear; so perfect is the system of espionage established by Count Benckendorf. This power is as much dreaded as the horrors of the Inquisition, to which, in some respects, it may safely be compared. By his rules, suspicion is so nearly allied to actual guilt, that innocence can hardly escape the penalties of crime. Society is mined; and

an unguarded remark may cause the explosion, which will seal the fate of the unconscious delinquent, and consign him at once to an unknown doom; or, if a foreigner, expel him from the country at twenty-four hours' notice. The remarks I have made in this letter would bring me within the latter category.

Notwithstanding his absoluteness, the Emperor does not put forth often the whole of his power; for if he did, it might not be permitted to endure long, as the examples of some of his predecessors prove. To understand well the difficulties of the peculiar political position of this country, you must remember that the vengeance of the people would be the more terrible from their ignorance, and from the length of their endurance. A government which blushes at nothing, because it plumes itself on the ignorance with which it shrouds its arrogation of power, is more dreaded than permanent: misery in the nation; brutishness in the army; terror of each other among those most to be dreaded; servility in the church; hypocrisy among the nobles; ignorance and squalidity among the people—such is the state of the country, which the inscrutable decree of Providence has created; and it is with this heterogeneous mass of corruption and baseness that the Emperor attempts to throw his weight into the balance of Europe, and to establish his dominion in the West. The vastness of his

power imposes its own limits, and even places him at the mercy of his agents and lieutenants: distance, and the ignorance of facts resulting from it, customs, and the self-interest of his subordinates, make him dependent on reports, and the good faith in which they are brought to him, for much of the information he receives. Combined Europe, at a breath, might compel Russia, from her geographical position, to fall in the scale of nations, and to confess that her power is one more of sufferance than reality. The outward appearance of its grandeur is but an illusion, founded on an attempt to appear civilised without being so: it is like the figure in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, with its feet of clay. If the sovereigns of Russia sought really to civilise the empire by its own energies — by cultivating the admirable germs which nature has placed in the hearts of the people — they would dazzle Europe less, but they would acquire a lasting and more extensive glory, and we should see them exercising a legitimate influence and power among other nations. Turkey itself might then succumb to this influence, without creating among other states any jealousy or alarm at this increase of power. But since the country has swerved from the well-defined track in the high road of civilisation, no efforts can place it in the right course, and the issue will be a spectacle for future generations.

LETTER XI.

Absence of Bustle in St. Petersburg. — No private Warehouses. — Remoteness of Government Depôts. — Obstructions to Trade. — The "Chinovniks," or Placemen. — Their Venality. — The "Artelchiks," or Messengers. — Their Fidelity. — Russian Joint Stock Bank proposed. — Evils of Monopoly. — Suicide of a Cabin Passenger. — Terror of the Captain of the Russian Authorities. — Smuggling extensively carried on. — Weak Defences of St. Petersburg. — Russia an inferior Naval Power. — Naval Cadets at St. Petersburg. — Russian Seamanship. — Characteristics of Russian Government. — Supreme Power of the Emperor.

In a large and opulent city, whose foreign trade is of the first magnitude, we look naturally for warehouses and magazines, and some real evidence of the bustle and activity of commerce; but in St. Petersburg we look in vain: it is essentially a court town, and, as even its merchants are not allowed to hold their becoming rank in society, the depôts of trade are removed as far from the public eye, and the resorts of fashionable life, as possible. There are no private warehouses of any description, but accommodation is furnished at the government depôts; and, either to carry out the ruling passion for uniformity, or to prevent all appearance of trade in the quays and

streets, these buildings, each of which is restricted to the reception of one article only, are placed at the furthest extremities of the city, each removed from the other almost by its whole length or breadth. Thus, the linseed warehouse is at least five miles distant from the tallow wharf, which is again two or three miles away from the hemp wharf; the oil depôt is at another spot, leather and herrings at others, and the Custom-house far away from any of them. The Exchange, which is, in effect, a noble building, is equally inconveniently situated: in fact, facilities for trade are not to be looked for, but rather obstructions of all kinds. These commence with the arrival of the vessels off Cronstadt, which are compelled to anchor off the guard ship to undergo certain formulæ; some hours of detention thus unnecessarily occur, during which time one of the sudden squalls common in the gulf not unfrequently comes on, and the vessels are either injured, or cast on one of the dangerous moles which surround the roadstead. Restrictions such as these would be tolerated in no other country; and it is surprising that remonstrances have not been made by the different governments, whose subjects have to submit to them under such imminent risk of life and property, although, perhaps, it is hopeless to expect simplicity or promptitude amidst the host of public functionaries who are employed, or to curtail the great

superfluity of public forms, writings, and useless repetitions, which encumber the slightest transaction. Business is, in fact, made for them, and not they for the business. The whole system can only be compared to an Augæan stable, which resists alike the cleansing stream of public opinion, and the interference of the Emperor. A change must take place over the whole surface of society, before any innovation can be attempted; because, to a considerable extent, the evil derives its source and strength from society itself.

Serfs, and others of the lowest class, are never employed even in the most subordinate offices, which are filled, for the most part, by retired soldiers, while the highest appointments in the various public offices are in the hands of men in the first rank; but the intermediate grades, and their name is legion, are conferred on an anomalous class, called the Chinovniks. These men are free by birth, and would form, in other countries, a class of gentlemen; but as that distinction is not recognised in Russia, they are, as their name implies, attached to the nobility, among whom they hold the lowest rank. To find employment for this race the public offices are thronged; and, as they have no property and are miserably paid, they contrive to realise a sufficient income by exacting bribes, or extorting money for services rendered though their interest with their superiors, for whom they, jackal-like, hunt down the game,

and share the spoil. It can easily be conceived that they are not over scrupulous, and that they contrive impediments for the purpose of levying a fine for their removal.

There is another body of individuals connected with trade, called "Artelchiks," the singularity of whose avocation and employment deserves a few words. A number of serfs unite themselves into a club or company, termed an Artel, and hire themselves to merchants as messengers and confidential counting-house servants, the Artel holding itself responsible for the character of each individual, and for any loss which may be sustained through him, and forming thus, as it were, a kind of Mutual Honesty Company. As there are no banks through which payments can be made and bills honoured, every merchant is compelled to be his own banker; all money transactions, therefore—which are effected by various denominations of notes, and by hard cash, principally of silver—are onerous, both as regards the trust to be reposed in the bearer, and the weight of the coin to be transferred. This business devolves entirely on the Artelchik, who counts the coin into bags, and arranges the notes into parcels according to their value, marking the envelopes with his initials in proof of their correctness. This account is received by the merchant without any further check or examination, and the sums are repaid away in the same state without fear or

hesitation. These men are poor, and their pay is slight, considering the nature of their employment and the temptations to which they are exposed; and yet a defalcation, or a betrayal of trust, is rarely known.

The establishment of a Joint Stock Bank, under the prevailing system of legalised monopoly, could not fail of being most beneficial to the shareholders, as soon as its merits and attendant conveniences came to be understood. The prejudices which it would have to encounter would be soon surmounted, and the chief, if not only difficulty, would be in the opposition of the large mercantile houses, whose per-centages on negotiating bills, and in making remittances to other countries, would be necessarily abridged. The formation of such a company could not be effected without special permission; but its monopolising character, while it protected itself, would have no injurious operation on the public, which cannot be said of other bodies founded on the same basis.

There is not a public company in the empire which is not established in the most arbitrary spirit, of monopoly, and which can in no way be interfered with, as long as the period allotted to its patent right exists. In some cases, particularly as regards travelling, the evil is almost unbearable. The Baltic Sea, for instance, the highway from Germany to the North, is a close monopoly as concerns the transit of passengers by steam; a

Dutch company having secured that privilege for a series of years. The consequence is that, with one exception, the vessels are bad, and the charges immoderately high; and, with true Dutch economy, to save the captain from a loss in providing a table, the meals are charged for, whether partaken of or not. An indirect opposition has sprung up by vessels plying from London and Havre; but still, as people prefer the shorter sea voyage, the evil remains unaltered.

These people, holding their privilege from the Russian Government, and navigating her sea, are amenable to her laws. A singular proof of the terror of them occurred in connexion with a melancholy event which took place on one of my passages. I had noticed for a couple of days something strange in the appearance of one of our passengers, who was slightly afflicted with paralysis, and who said that he was going with his mother and young son to try the effect of the German baths. To accommodate his infirmity his bed was arranged for him at night on one of the sofas of the state cabin, and thither I saw him repair late on the third night. I was the only person up, and continued reading till about two A.M., and had hardly inserted myself into my berth before I heard a most piercing scream. In an instant the thought struck me that the afflicted man had destroyed himself, and I rushed upon deck: the surmise was too true; he had thrown

himself overboard, and I could just see his uplifted hands sink beneath the white line of the wake of the ship. The steam was immediately stopped, and the stern boat lowered with the utmost promptness: but it was too late; he rose no more. The effect of stopping the ship had, as it appeared, disturbed his mother; who, filled with some presentiment of evil, came upon deck, exclaiming for her son before she knew of his loss. The painful duty of making her acquainted with it devolved on me; and, as there was fortunately another lady passenger on board, I took the bereaved mother below, and left her in her charge.

I believe that people always become selfish at sea, and that which would distress them on shore, and dwell on the recollection, has only a momentary effect afloat, and is forgotten. I remember that when I related the circumstance at breakfast, every one appeared shocked for the moment; but in half an hour the chess and card tables were in full operation, as if the event had been a dream. The captain was in the greatest distress, being, as he said he was, accountable to the Russian Government for her subjects, and how could he persuade the authorities that he was not to blame. In his terror he was a perfect polyglot, mixing up every language he was acquainted with (and they were not a few), in his attempts to exonerate himself from blame, where there was really none to be attached to him. He wished very much to draw

up a memorial of the case, and to get all the passengers to sign it; but that was too absurd, for they were all asleep: so I took down for him the evidence of every person who was present, and, making each one sign it, gave it to him. On a subsequent voyage with the same man he told me that it had been satisfactorily received, and that he had had no trouble in the business.'

Smuggling by consent, and even the free entrance of goods, is practicable, provided the fee be sufficient to purchase the permission; but as this is still heavy, ingenuity and cunning are at work to baffle the most vigilant precautions. But the Custom-house authorities are not adepts enough at their business: their system is too clumsy and bulky to be worked with the necessary promptness and energy, as the following circumstance illustrates. A trader, having paid the duty on a certain number of casks of coffee, requested permission of the Custom-house authorities to re-ship them to Cronstadt, under the pretence that he could not sell it to advantage in the city, but believed he could find a ready market for it among the shipping at Cronstadt. As there appeared to be no reasonable objection to this application, consent was given; and away went a lot of casks, well filled with gravel. Weeks passed away, and again the dealer presented himself to the heads of the Customs, begging for a permit to have his coffee back, as the season was closing and he had made no sales. The required sanction

was obtained, and again the casks were brought back; but now they contained the real article, which had been smuggled into them at Cronstadt. Such and numerous other instances occur of extensive smuggling being carried on under the very eyes of the duped authorities. A handsome fee will, however, cause them to wink at these frauds, and even to facilitate them.

St. Petersburg is defended naturally by the bar at the embouchure of the river, which, I believe, on ordinary occasions, does not carry more than eight feet water, thus precluding any but small craft from passing; and it is further protected by the fortifications at Cronstadt, which are bristling with cannon: yet, in order to conceal its real weakness, and to compel vessels to keep in a given channel, reports are industriously circulated of the existence of shoals and rocks at the back of the island of Cronstadt, which is perfectly unprotected; for, to forbid the navigation, would be tantamount to an acknowledgment of its practicability and their own defencelessness. The number of the guns renders the place formidable to appearance; but, as they are mounted on ramparts without any breastwork or protection, the fact must be otherwise. I remember on my first voyage sleeping on board ship at the anchorage, surrounded by the fortified moles, and being much struck with the "All's well" of the sentries, who are compelled to show their watchfulness by

uttering at every few minutes a loud shout, prolonged till its power ceases with the breath.

There are many reasons which will prevent Russia from becoming a first-rate naval power as long as she is restricted to her present boundaries. Whether from the effects of the climate, or from some peculiarity in the waters of the Gulf and the Baltic, her ships last but a few years; then, for more than six months in the year they are dismantled, hoarded over, and laid up in ordinary in the docks, and every year fresh sailors are to be formed. The manning of the ships and the recruiting of the army are on the same footing; and the government, which thinks and acts for the people, compels them to accommodate themselves to its wants, without regard to their tastes or qualifications: it only cares for the material which time and discipline are to model. Thus men are drafted into the navy without the slightest previous acquaintance with their duties; and the complement of the ships, though perfect in its numbers, is sadly deficient in seamen. The consequence is, that they are most lubberly handled, and worse manœuvred. I do not venture this remark on my own authority, but on that of a post-captain in our own navy, who paid some attention to these matters on the spot. There is a strong naval cadet corps at St. Petersburg for the education of young lads to officer the fleet, and who have assigned to them three small frigates

in which they are said to go to sea during the summer months; but their voyage seldom extends beyond Peterhof, a distance of twenty miles, where they lie at anchor off the palace. With the best and strongest intentions, and energies worthy a better result, there is so much pettiness, and sacrifice of real benefit to the love of display and appearance, that the evil overbalances the good, and no real advancement is made. Russian seamanship is like the movement of a rocking-horse — motion without progress. The notions that these boys acquire of seamanship, by getting sail on a mast erected in one of the halls of their college, would be of little assistance when attempted to be put into action afloat. We mount with confidence a ladder protected at its sides by surrounding walls; but we should be unequal to the risk of ascending one placed on to the roof of a house. The best officers in the Russian fleet are Englishmen, and Russians who served as midshipmen in our own ships; but the former are now nearly extinct.

The effect produced on the mind in Russia, without alluding to its restrictions and policy, is like being in the presence of a giant, whose mental powers are unequal to his physical strength; which he puts forth as a proof of his sinews, without applying it to any real use: the showman directs, and the machine obeys. A line of

Horace strikes me as being peculiarly to the point:—

"Vis consilî expers mole ruit suâ."

The mystery and secresy in which every thing is enveloped have a twofold object: they add importance and weight to the government; which, confident in its resources and ability, proceeds boldly in its course, without seeking aid or advice, holding itself superior to the common herd of mankind; and they impose a degree of passiveness and non-interference on the people, from their positive ignorance of all that concerns them; sealing thus their dependence and subjection. This labour—for labour it is to keep in constant and never decreasing operation so vast a machinery, such complicated forms, and so jealous a system — is achieved for no national good, but solely to maintain the empire under the control of one man; to whom, perhaps, more than to any other living monarch, the celebrated flattery of Virgil might be applied,

"Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet;"

so boundless is his authority, and so irresponsible his rule. The fiat of his will, carried out in defiance of the obstacles of the climate and the elements, stamp him as a man endowed with almost superhuman powers.

LETTER XII.

Military Mania of the Emperor.—Sham Siege of St. Petersburg.— Annual Review of the Troops.—Majestic Bearing of the Emperor.— Vast Encampment and Review at Krasnoe Selo.— Russian Cruelty to Animals.— The Troops at Evening Prayer.—Artillery Practice.—Sham Fight.— Simultaneous Advance of the whole Cavalry and Artillery.— Pageant in Honour of the Princess of Mecklenburgh.— Grand Illumination of St. Petersburg.— Domestic Affections of the Emperor Nicholas.— Official Programme of the Ceremonial at the Marriage of the Grand Duchess Marie to the Duke de Leuchtenberg.

No country in Europe can equal Russia in the brilliancy of its military displays, nor in the gigantic force she brings forward on such occasions; but, notwithstanding this, she is not a military nation like France; that is, inspired with military ardour, and the love of arms; for what the latter has by intuition, she only knows in the mechanical obedience and compulsory service yielded to the military mania of the Emperor. The love of conquest, and the fulfilment of ambitious predestination, are deeply graven in his heart, and keep alive within him a restless feeling; which, in the absence of the stern realities of war, he gives full play to in some of the most extraordinary

exhibitions and performances which can be conceived, particularly in the heart of a large city.

Picture to yourself the effect of representing this city in a state of siege; which actually occurred, and was to have lasted for three days; but a succession of violent rains threw a damp (excuse the pun) on the operations, and they were broken off on the second day. The programme was this: the besieging army was to drive in the defending columns, which were to take refuge in the citadel. An investment was to take place, and finally a vigorous sortie made by the besieged, assisted by troops who were to succeed in joining them from the city, was to repulse the enemy, and raise the siege. To the inhabitants this was most inconvenient and annoying; but it amused me to pass along the bridges and leading avenues, and to find them occupied by troops and artillery, with Cossacks bivouacking on the quays, and to see the parade of gun-boats on the river to assist in the operations. The closing scene would really have been worth seeing.

The Emperor frequently reviews the regiment on turn for the duty of the day, and, acting as his own adjutant, gives the words of command himself. Once in the course of the winter he collects the whole force of all arms within the city, and causes it to defile before him, as he stands on a balcony in the palace. This I have seen also; but the effect of crowding upwards of 60,000 men,

cavalry, infantry, and artillery, tumbrils, pontoons, and hospital-waggons, even into that large space, is little better than confusion to a spectator.

On the 1st of May, the great annual review takes place on the Champ de Mars; but it requires the graphic powers of a Scott to do justice to the scene. It is a display which would gratify the pride of any monarch, and particularly one so ambitious of military glory as the Emperor Nicholas. It must be to satisfy this feeling, and to receive the homage of this unrivalled force, that he has ordained this brilliant spectacle. Through the kindness of a friend, I had the advantage of a window commanding the whole scene, which more than dazzled me,—it bewildered me. The variety of the uniforms, the splendour of the appointments, the varied and picturesque costumes of the different tribes, with the glittering of arms resplendent under the rays of an unclouded sun, formed the most gorgeous sight I have ever beheld.

There is something chivalric in the bearing and conduct of the Emperor, which gives grace to the scene, and fills the mind with admiration of the man, who throws himself for the moment into the shade, and assumes, comparatively, a subordinate part in the grand performance of the day; although, doubtless, this great adept in the knowledge of human nature is aware of the effect he is producing on the minds of his subjects. Attended

by a brilliant staff, he escorts the Empress and her daughters through the extended ranks to a superb tent prepared for them; and, taking his position on horseback by their side, he commands the whole mass to defile before them, column succeeding column in almost endless array. Twice this is repeated, and the last time by the cavalry and artillery at speed. The infantry of the guard, the cuirassiers, lancers, and other cavalry, the Cossacks with their long spears, the Circassians in chain armour, and armed with bows and arrows, a numerous field of artillery, (I counted 130 pieces,) and lastly, a complete service of pontoons, sweep round the ground. The eye, confused by the vast mass of moving beings brought within its scope, becomes dazzled by the gleaming of the weapons, and the richness and variety of the costumes. The sight of this immense host, splendid in its appointments, perfect in its discipline, and devoted to his will, must be a proud moment to the Emperor, since it thrills even the breast of a spectator.

Shortly after this affair, the chief body of the troops, with others drawn together for the occasion, are marched off to the plains of Krasnoe Selo to the encampment prepared for them, forming a force of 100,000 men; and there, as has just occurred, it is the habit of the Emperor to command in person for three days. The remembrance of the scene will be long forcibly im-

pressed on my memory; but, vivid as it is now, I despair of conveying to you even a shadow of the reality; which is without its equal, were it only for the simple reason that no other country can produce such a force as the élite of its army. The guards alone numerically exceed the strength any time in the Peninsula.

Krasnoe Selo is only a village, in which the Emperor has built a number of houses for himself and suite, and which are occupied only during the time of the encampment; afterwards it relapses into its original dulness. Its population of peasants, steadily go through the task of cultivating the land, which, however, never yields a crop, as it is trodden down and ruined by the troops; but they are handsomely compensated, and are, in fact, gainers, as they are not subject to any loss from seasons or other incidental causes.

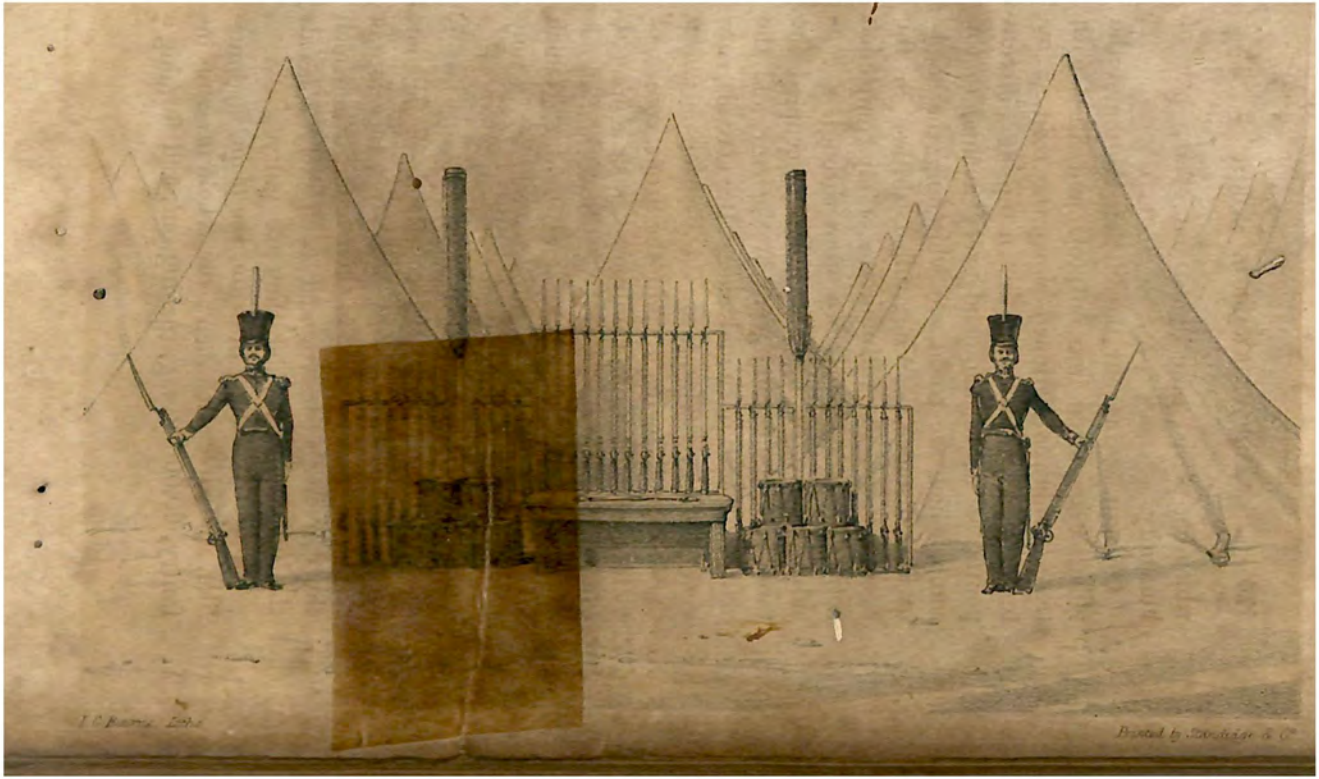
These reviews are entirely of an exclusive character, and no person is permitted to be present excepting by the especial invitation of the Emperor and in full uniform. I, however, ventured on intruding; and was, literally, not only the sole civilian present, but also the only spectator. A wish expressed to his ambassador by any foreigner holding a commission, and communicated by him to the proper authorities, is sure to be favourably noticed by the Emperor, who orders quarters to be assigned to him; and, considering him as his guest, furnishes his table, places a

carriage at his disposal, and mounts him from his own stud. My travelling companion, a post-captain in our navy, being entitled to these privileges, received an invitation, and we journeyed down together. The distance was not great; but we were compelled to accommodate ourselves to the custom of the country, and to travel with four horses abreast, which, despite the dust and the heat, took us down at speed; and, to my great distress, in going into the coach-yard the next morning, I found the poor beasts still in harness, and attached to the carriage. The Russians are brutal horsemasters; and our driver, on my expostulating with him, said that it was of no matter, and that the horses were used to it; but I insisted on his relieving them of their harness. This is a proof, if it were wanting, of the gradation of tyranny. The Russian has to yield himself hourly a willing slave to the caprices and neglect of his master, — to exert his powers of endurance to the last degree, — till life even passes away in the torpor attendant on prolonged exposure to the cold; and thus he treats the beasts entrusted to him with a brutality and indifference akin to that which he experiences himself. Were he conscious of his inhumanity, he would, by a parity of reasoning, perceive the extent of his own wretched and mechanical existence, and in this first dawning of his reason would resist the yoke

which has placed him almost out of the pale of humanity.

On approaching our destination, we found the villages converted into outposts, and filled with troops, videttes stationed along the road at intervals, and field-pieces drawn up at different points, so as to command every avenue to the camp, which we could see whitening the slopes in the distance. We strolled thither in the evening; and, the full uniform of my companion acting as a passport, we went through a considerable part of it. The infantry occupied the table land, the cavalry were in the rear, and the artillery placed in the advance. Broad roads, running at right angles, form the divisions between the different regiments; in the front centre of each of which a kind of military trophy is erected, composed of the regimental colours, several stands of arms, drums, and a kind of pedestal, on which are deposited the swords of such officers as may be under arrest. The officers, to whom this annual repetition of exposure and discomfort is excessively irksome, have contrived, in defiance of the regulations, and at some risk therefore, a complete wooden lining to their tents; over which the canvass is drawn, and completely conceals the innovation of which they are guilty.

Presently, at beat of drum, the plain, Cadmus-like, was alive with men; the whole mass of infantry, 60,000 strong, turning out, and forming a



line two deep in front of the encampment. After a pause of the most profound silence, the bands of the different regiments commenced playing, and a rocket shooting into the air, giving the appointed signal, the evening gun was fired, and the bands concluded with the national hymn. Again there was a dead silence; and, at the word, given every head was bared, and some minutes were devoted to prayers and crossing. The men were then dismissed to their tents, and again the ground was clear of all but the sentries: —

> "It seem'd as if their mother earth
> Had swallow'd up her warlike birth."

I was forcibly struck with this scene; and, divesting it of its moral character, felt how powerful an organ was kept in constant operation by the Emperor, to rivet his own power, and to be available as an element in rousing the enthusiasm of the men, when circumstances should render this additional stimulant necessary. It is but a continuation of the system of the late Emperor; whose public proclamation, particularly on the occasion of the French invasion, breathed a religious spirit, and called on the nation to defend its altars; — a Roman custom, perpetuated in Russia!

The next morning, at the early hour of five, we were roused by an aide-de-camp, who, apologizing for his early intrusion, brought my friend

the order of the day, noting the hour and place for the artillery review and practice. Further sleep was impossible, for already the work of preparation had begun, and for two hours the heavy rumbling of the artillery passing our windows left us no choice but to watch gun succeeding gun in an endless line.

The arrival of the Emperor on the ground, with a brilliant staff of several hundred officers of rank, and the ministers of the foreign powers at his court, in every variety of costume, was the signal for the commencement of operations, which consisted entirely of artillery practice. I was informed that the service was good, but the practice indifferent, as few of the shots told. It was, however, a noble thing to see 150 pieces of cannon, the larger ones with eight horses attached to them, bounding over the plain, now advancing in line, then suddenly retreating, unlimbering and limbering, and finally passing the Emperor and his staff at the greatest speed.

The review, on the second day, consisted of the artillery and the infantry; and on the third, all arms were assembled for the purposes of a sham fight; which, considering the vastness of the army in the field, the singularity of some of the corps composing it, and their peculiar mode of attack, together with the great extent of country over which the operations were continued, carried

a greater degree of reality with it than is usual with such scenes.

The attack was begun by clouds of Cossacks dispersing themselves in every direction, and galloping in apparent confusion, charging with their long spears, and uttering a loud wild scream; and, if they were supposed to be repulsed, those who were nearest to each other threw themselves rapidly into small circles with their spears advanced, and then they concentrated themselves, and charged *en masse*. At one place there was a general advance of infantry; at another, the line was broken, and cavalry and artillery rushed to cover the disaster; here some guns were deserted, and a rush was made for their recovery; there the enemy was in flight, and masses of light cavalry were poured down upon them; finally, after the exertions of some hours, and an advance of several miles, in a smoke which hung like a curtain over the ground, a fort was taken by escalade, and breathing time was allowed.

In the centre of the plain, a large earthen mound, or *mamelon* as a Russian officer called it, is thrown up for the accommodation of the Imperial family, who were there on that day; and thither the Emperor repaired. Diplomatist as he is, he selected, from the crowd of distinguished men who surrounded him, the Austrian ambassador, and held a long and private communication with him;—a mark of distinction which was

to have its effect in the political circles. At this moment the whole army was out of sight; but presently he summoned an aide-de-camp, and the staff arranged themselves in a line behind him, mounted as he was on a beautiful black charger, one of the most noble looking animals I have ever seen. Shortly afterwards a low dull rumbling sound was heard, and, as it approached, the earth seemed to groan under its influence; it was the whole mass of cavalry and artillery advancing in squadrons *au pas de charge:* Cossacks, Circassians, Bashkirs, Hulans, lancers, hussars, dragoons, cuirassiers, and artillery, all passed with a salute and a cheer. The ground appeared to tremble at the rolling of the guns and the rapid trampling of upwards of 20,000 horses:—

"Quadrupedumque putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum."

If the line was not true, he halted the squadron in fault, (and necessarily those in the rear,) reprimanded the officer, and again sent them on.

Thus closed the scene, which left both eye and mind exhausted with its imposing splendours.

But other fatigues were in contemplation for a portion of the troops, whom I saw preparing for a march of upwards of 600 miles. Distances count for nothing in Russia. Every regiment in the empire which had served at the battle of Borodino, had to send a considerable detachment to that spot, where the emperor intended to go

through the manœuvres of that battle, to celebrate the completion of a trophy or column of iron which he had caused to be erected on that memorable field.

Among the troops is a regiment called the Pavloski, from having been particularly favoured by the emperor Paul, which wears, as a mark of distinction, the singular brass-fronted mitre-shaped cap peculiar to that day; and, as it has seen much service, the brass fronts, perforated with shot-holes, are perpetuated and worn at the present moment.

While on the subject of pageants, I cannot refrain from describing one of a peaceful character, which recently took place on the occasion of the entrée into the capital of the princess of Mecklenburgh, the betrothed of the Grand Duke Constantine. At an early hour the military had taken up their posts in one unbroken line, three deep, on one side of the streets, extending from the outskirts of the town to the palace; and, as the distance is not less than six versts, there could not be less than 100,000 men under arms. The populace were confined by the police to the opposite side of the road, leaving the centre thus free. Carpets, tapestry, and shawls, hanging from the windows, which were crowded with spectators, added to the life and gaiety of the scene. In due time the sound of martial music burst upon the ear, and the glittering of arms in the distance announced the approach of the procession; which

consisted entirely of cavalry of the regiments d'élite, in the highest state of equipment;—the Circassians and Georgians, riding with shovel-shaped stirrups, and mounted on white horses, the extremity of whose tails were dyed red; Cossacks of the Don and the Ukraine, and a host of other tribes in their peculiar national costumes; and, conspicuous among the rest, a regiment of cura-siers in white uniforms, wearing black cuirasses and helmets, and mounted on black horses, swept by, squadron after squadron, in all the pomp and pride of the favoured and picked warriors of their country; and at last, preceded by a staff of the most distinguished men in the empire, came the imperial carriages. I remember to have seen engravings of the old style of equipage used in England one hundred years ago, and such were the state vechicles in question,—large, ungainly, cumbersome affairs, covered with gilding, drawn by eight horses, caparisoned in the same old style, and bestrode by postillions in cocked hats, long-tailed coats, big jack-boots, and bearing whips as long as themselves. Every thing, in fact, was rich and noble, but antiquated and ponderous.

The Empress, one of her daughters, and the bride elect occupied the first carriage; on either side of which, the Emperor and his son, the Grand Duke, rode on horseback. Maids of honour and dames-de-cour followed in other carriages, and a strong rear-guard of cavalry closed what really

formed the procession: but each regiment of infantry fell successively into the rear as the cortége passed it, and thus lengthened the before interminable line.

In the evening the city was brilliantly illuminated. On ordinary occasions, such as saints' days and anniversaries, which occur frequently, when illuminations are enjoined by the police, a few grease-pots are stuck along the curb of the pavement; but, in this instance, all that ingenuity and the most lavish expenditure could contrive was effected. The Russians are certainly masters of this art, and of fireworks; but, like the rest of their undertakings they cannot understand them on a small scale: the elegance and simplicity of a device is too unimportant and microscopic for the eye accustomed to immensity; and thus frameworks and stages are erected of prodigious magnitude and extent. The public buildings had huge ranges of scaffolding carried up to their full height and length, representing architectural devices, and blazing with lights, or their whole outline was traced with lamps: the erection at the Etât Major alone cost 3000*l*. In the streets an unbroken line of wooden frames was continued, running along the front of the kerb-stone, the occupants of each house following their fancy; and thus temples, altars, stars, festoons, &c., blazed forth with the light of day. Little glasses with a cotton wick inserted

in tallow, and fixed in wire sockets, are the means employed.

Several ships of war, which were moored off the palace, and had been decked out with flags during the day, were illuminated in the evening; their hulls, yards, and standing rigging, being hung with lamps. The most serene weather favoured the display, which was to have lasted for three nights; but a storm of rain concluded the scene, which, gorgeous as it was, began to pall on the senses. The utmost order and regularity prevailed, and, no carriage being allowed in the streets, the dense population had room to circulate without danger; and besides, from the position of the scaffoldings bearing the illuminations, the road was the only place from which they could be seen. Sovereignty passes through the streets at all times without causing confusion or exciting crowds, and recognised only by silent and respectful salutes; and now, when the mass was almost wedged together, a few mounted policemen cleared a space, and the Emperor and his family, in a plain two-horsed carriage drove leisurely through the streets, to see and be seen.

The young creature in honour of whom this great national rejoicing took place must have experienced strange feelings at this her first introduction to her adopted country, and at the exchange from a petty German court to that of the vast empire in which her future lot is cast. A con-

siderable time must elapse, according to Russian etiquette, before the marriage takes place; as the bride elect must know something of Russ, and be taught the elements of the faith of the Greek church, into which she is to be baptized.

A similar event to that which I have just described took place on the marriage of the Hereditary Grand Duke. The succession to the throne has been strengthened by the birth of a son, to the great joy of the Emperor, who is most tenderly attached to his family, and seeks relaxation in domestic happiness. I have seen him nurse this child, and carry it to the window of the palace at Peterhof, to show it to the crowd collected to celebrate the Empress' anniversary. I want nothing more than such a scene as this to assure me of the real benevolence of heart and affection of the Emperor; for, although doubtless acted, and the impression it was to create felt, yet it could not have been premeditated, but was rather the spontaneous action of the man, arising from the circumstance of the moment, and from his constant desire to keep up the part he has set himself to perform. The slightest acts of such a man are construed into a meaning; and it is not the least part of his policy to take care that they shall be construed rightly, and that when he treads the stage, his performance shall be marked and perfect. The whole empire is a living witness that kindness of heart in him is a natural attribute; for, despot

though he be, he stops short of the tyrant: when the two characters might not only be combined from disposition, as was the case in Paul, but might become so from the knowledge and exercise of unlimited power. His affection for the Empress is admitted by all; and her great influence over him corroborates the fact: the Emperor also sinks into the father, in seeking to secure the happiness of his daughters rather than to sacrifice them to the interests of state policy, by permitting them to make their own selection in marriage, instead of following the example of other powers by wedding them without consulting their affections. Honour to him for the deed! It is one of the brightest jewels in his crown, and certainly enhances his popularity. So true is it that the mind is more operated on by the display of kind and natural impulses than by the formal and heartless show of rank and pomp: the one strikes chords which vibrate in unison, and the other glances off the heart, which it leaves untouched.

The programme of the marriage of his eldest daughter the Grand Duchess Marie with the Duke of Leuchtenberg, which was celebrated in 1839, is so singular, and throws so much light over the ceremonies of the Court, and the pomp and grandeur of the empire, to say nothing of the minute attention of the Emperor to forms and discipline, and his love of display and pageantry, that I add it verbatim as it was published.

CÉRÉMONIAL

DE

LA CÉLÉBRATION DU MARIAGE

DE SON ALTESSE IMPÉRIALE

MADAME LA GRANDE DUCHESSE MARIE NICOLAIEVNA

AVEC

SON ALTESSE SÉRÉNISSIME

MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC MAXIMILIEN DE LEUCHTENBERG.

Approuvé par Sa Majesté l'Empereur.

Le jour qui aura été choisi pour la cérémonie, une salve de cinq coups de canon, tirés de la forteresse de Saint-Pétersbourg, annoncera que dans cette journée devra avoir lieu la célébration du Mariage de Son Altesse Impériale Madame la Grande Duchesse Marie Nicolaievna avec *Son Altesse Sérénissime Monseigneur le Duc Maximilien de Leuchtenberg.*

D'après les annonces qui auront été envoyées, les Membres du Saint Synode et du haut Clergé, la Cour et les autres personnes de distinction des deux sexes,

les Ambassadeurs et Ministres étrangers, les Généraux, les Officiers de tout grade de la Garde et les Officiers supérieurs des autres troupes, se réuniront au Palais d'Hiver à... heures du matin, les Dames en costume russe, les Cavaliers en grand uniforme.

Lorsque les dames d'honneur, qui auront été appelées pour habiller l'Auguste Fiancée, sortiront des appartements intérieurs, après avoir accompli cette fonction, un Maître des Cérémonies en avertira l'Auguste Fiancé, et l'accompagnera jusqu'aux appartements intérieurs.

Dans cette journée, l'Auguste Fiancée portera une couronne sur la tête, et par dessus la robe un manteau de velours ponceau, doublé d'hermine, dont la longue queue sera portée aux côtés par quatre Chambellans, et à l'extrémité par le dignitaire en fonctions d'Ecuyer de la Cour de Son Altesse Impériale.

Leurs Majestés l'Empereur et l'Impératrice se rendront des appartements intérieurs à la Chapelle du Palais dans l'ordre suivant :

1.

Les Fourriers de la Cour et les Fourriers de la Chambre IMPÉRIALE.

2.

Les Maîtres des Cérémonies et le Grand Maître des Cérémonies.

3.

Les Gentilshommes de la Chambre, les Chambellans et les Cavaliers de la Cour IMPÉRIALE marchants deux à deux, les moins anciens en avant.

4.

Les premiers Chargés de la Cour, deux à deux, les moins anciens en avant.

5.

Un Maréchal de la Cour avec son bâton.

6.

Le Grand Chambellan et le Grand Maréchal de la Cour avec son bâton.

7.

Leurs Majestés l'Empereur et l'Impératrice, suivis du Ministre de la Maison de l'Empereur, ainsi que des Aides de Camp Généraux et Aides de Camp de Sa Majesté Impériale, de service.

8.

Son Altesse Impériale Monseigneur le Césarévitch Grand Duc Alexandre Nicolaievitch.

9.

Leurs Altesses Impériales Messeigneurs les Grands Ducs Constantin Nicolaievitch et Michel Nicolaievitch.

10.

Leurs Altesses Impériales Monseigneur le Grand Duc Michel Pavlovitch et Madame la Grande Duchesse Hélène Pavlona.

11.

Son Altesse Impériale Madame la Grande Duchesse Marie Nicolaievna, avec son Auguste Fiancé, Son Altesse Sérénissime Monseigneur le Duc Maximilien de Leuchtenberg.

12.

Leurs Altesses Impériales Mesdames les Grandes Duchesses Olga Nicolaievna, Alexandra Nicolaievna, et Marie Mikhailovna.

13.

Leurs Altesses Sérénissimes Monseigneur le Prince

Pierre d'Oldenbourg et Madame la Princesse son Epouse.

Les Dames d'honneur, les Demoiselles d'honneur à portrait, les Demoiselles d'honneur de Sa Majesté l'Impératrice et de Leurs Altesses Impériales Mesdames les Grandes Duchesses, ainsi que les autres personnes de distinction des deux sexes, suivront par ordre d'ancienneté.

A l'entrée de la Chapelle, Leurs Majestés Impériales seront reçues par les Membres du Saint Synode et du haut Clergé, portant la croix et l'eau bénite.

Au commencement du service divin, lorsque l'on chantera le verset: Господи силою твоею возвеселится Царь, Sa Majesté l'Empereur conduira les Augustes Fiancés à la place préparée pour la célébration du Mariage, et en même temps les personnes désignées pour porter les couronnes s'approcheront des Augustes Fiancés.

Alors commencera, d'après le rit de l'Eglise grecque, la cérémonie du Mariage, pendant laquelle, après l'Evangile, on fera mention, dans la prière pour la Famille Impériale, de Madame la Grande Duchesse Marie Nicolaievna et de son Epoux.

Après la cérémonie du Mariage, les Augustes Epoux présenteront leurs remerciements à Leurs Majestés Impériales, et reviendront occuper leurs places. Le Métropolitain, assisté des Membres du Saint Synode, commencera ensuite les prières d'actions de grâces; et lorsqu'on entonnera le *Te Deum*, il sera tiré, des remparts de la forteresse de Saint-Pétersbourg, une salve de cent coups de canon.

A l'issue de la cérémonie religieuse, les Membres

du Saint Synode et du haut Clergé offriront leurs félicitations à LEURS MAJESTÉS IMPÉRIALES.

En sortant de la Chapelle, LEURS MAJESTES IMPERIALES et la Famille Impériale retourneront dans les appartements intérieurs avec le même cortége et dans l'ordre énoncé ci-dessus. A LEUR arrivée dans la pièce où un Autel Catholique aura été dressé, SA MAJESTE L'EMPEREUR conduira les Augustes Epoux à cet Autel, où la cérémonie du Mariage sera alors célébrée d'après le rit Catholic Romain. A l'issue de cette cérémonie, la FAMILLE IMPERIALE rentrera dans l'intérieur des appartements, après avoir reçu les félicitations du Clergé Catholique.

Lorsque l'heure du banquet sera venue, et que les dignitaires des trois premières classes auront occupé les places qui leur auront été désignées, on viendra l'annoncer à LEURS MAJESTÉS IMPÉRIALES, qui se rendront à table accompagnées de la FAMILLE IMPÉRIALE, et précédées de la Cour.

LEURS MAJESTÉS IMPÉRIALES et tous les Membres de la FAMILLE IMPÉRIALE seront servis à table par des Chambellans; les coupes seront présentées à LEURS MAJESTÉS IMPÉRIALES par les Grands Echansons; aux Augustes nouveaux Epoux, par le dignitaire en fonctions d'Ecuyer de la Cour de SON ALTESSE IMPÉRIALE MADAME LA GRANDE DUCHESSE; à LEURS ALTESSES IMPÉRIALES MONSEIGNEUR LE CESAREVITCH GRAND DUC HÉRITIER, MESSEIGNEURS LES GRANDS DUCS ET MESDAMES LES GRANDES DUCHESSES, par des Chambellans.

Pendant le repas, il y aura un concert vocal et instrumental.

Les toasts seront portés au bruit des salves d'artil-

lerie, tirées des remparts de la forteresse de Saint-Pétersbourg;

Savoir :

1. A la santé de LEURS MAJESTÉS IMPÉRIALES: 51 coups de canon;
2. Des Augustes nouveaux Epoux : 31 coups de canon;
3. De toute la Famille IMPÉRIALE : 31 coups de canon ;
4. De *Son Altesse Royale Madame la Duchesse de Leuchtenberg* : 31 coups de canon ;
5. Du Clergé et de tous les fidèles sujets de SA MAJESTÉ L'EMPEREUR : 31 coups de canon.

Après le banquet, LEURS MAJESTÉS IMPÉRIALES et la FAMILLE IMPÉRIALE retourneront, avec le même cortége, dans les appartements intérieurs.

Dans la soirée du même jour, il y aura un bal paré, auquel assisteront toutes les personnes de distinction des deux sexes, les Ambassadeurs et Ministres étrangers, et les personnes présentées à la Cour.

Avant la fin du bal, les personnes désignées par l'EMPEREUR pour recevoir les nouveaux Epoux se rendront dans les appartements de *Leurs Altesses*, où LEURS MAJESTÉS L'EMPEREUR ET L'IMPÉRATRICE, précédées de la Cour, les accompagneront.

A l'entrée de ces appartements, LEURS MAJESTÉS IMPÉRIALES et les nouveaux Epoux seront reçus par les personnes désignées à cet effet, et se rendront ensuite dans l'intérieur des appartements, où se trouvera une Dame d'honneur pour le déshabille de *Madame la Grande Duchesse.*

Dans cette journée, il sera récité des prières d'actions de grâces dans toutes les églises, et les cloches sonneront, ainsi que les deux jours suivants; la capitale sera illuminée le soir pendant trois jours.

Le 4 juillet, les Augustes Epoux recevront, à onze heures du matin, les félicitations des personnes de distinction des deux sexes admises à la Cour, et à une heure de l'après-midi, celles du Corps diplomatique.

Le soir, il y aura Spectacle au Grand Théâtre, en gala.

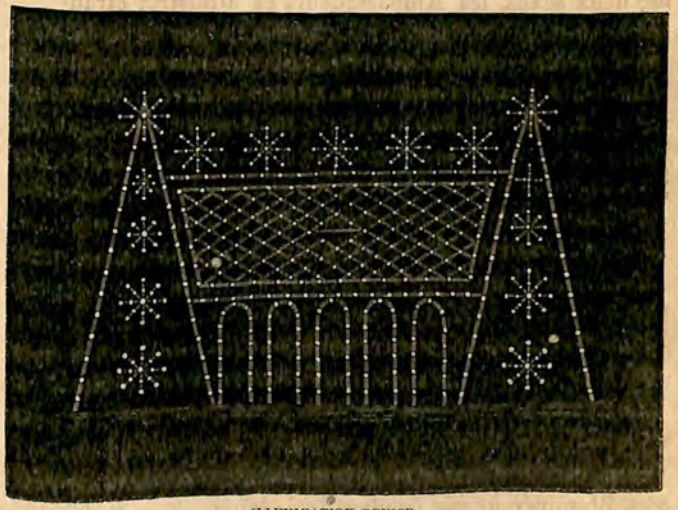
Le 5 juillet, grand Bal dans la Salle Blanche du Palais d'Hiver, et soupé.

Le 7 juillet, Bal chez LEURS ALTESSES IMPÉRIALES MONSEIGNEUR LE GRAND DUC MICHEL PAVLOVITCH et MADAME LA GRANDE DUCHESSE HÉLÈNE PAVLONA.

Le 9 juillet, Bal chez le *Prince d'Oldenbourg.*

Le 10 juillet, Départ de la Cour IMPÉRIALE pour Péterhoff.

Le 11 juillet, Bal masqué public et illumination à Péterhoff.



ILLUMINATION DEVICE.

LETTER XIII.

Palace of Peterhof. — Fête Day of the Empress. — Beauty of the Imperial Family. — Levée of the People in the Palace. — Striking Contrasts of Condition and Costume. — Nicholas and Napoleon. — Festivities in the Gardens of Peterhof. — Aqueous Tree. — Imperial Promenade en voiture. — *Russian Mode of greeting the Sovereign. — Splendid Illumination of the Gardens. — Awful Hurricane and Catastrophe. — Suppression of Facts by the Police. — Universal Duplicity and Faithlessness of the Russians. — Aristocratic and Autocratic Despotism. — Scrutinising Suspicion in Society. — Depressing Influence of continual Dread. — Fear, the ruling Power in Russia. — Gloom and Mistrust prevalent.*

THERE are three palaces in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg, which are occupied by the Imperial family at stated and regular periods during the summer months: those at Tsarskoe, Selo, and on the Yelagen Island are, in fact, private residences; where the fatigues and ceremonies of the court are, to a great extent, dispensed with, and as much tranquillity and retirement obtained as can fall to the lot of royalty; but that at Peterhof, although there is also a small domestic residence attached to it, is devoted more to the splendour and formalities of the court. It is the scene of a great national spectacle, which has not its parallel elsewhere in sin-

gularity and effect. Its gardens are very extensive, lying along the shores of the Gulf of Finland, and washed by its waters. In the midst of them stands the palace itself, situated on an eminence, and commanding a fine view. It was begun by the indefatigable Peter, but has been enlarged and improved by his successors, so that it is now of considerable extent. In the front is a canal of some hundred yards in length—a relic of Peter's Dutch taste,—which joins the gulf, and from which jets-d'eau and other artificial waterworks are supplied. These are far inferior to those at Versailles, to which they have been compared—probably, on account of the difficulty of constructing fountains on an extensive scale in such a climate. The apartments are very splendid, and contain some fine paintings, among which is a remarkable one of the Empress Catherine II. She is represented in the Russian uniform, booted, and sitting astride on a white horse, in her hat is the oaken branch she wore at the memorable revolution which placed her on the throne, and which was the distinguishing badge of her adherents.

At this spot, on the 2d July (old style), the anniversary of the Empress' fête-day is held—a day of considerable excitement as regards the inhabitants of St. Petersburg. Every carriage is in requisition, and the thronged decks of the steamboats, which are plying incessantly, are sufficiently

indicative of the popular feeling. It is estimated that at least 200,000 people congregate on the occasion. Etiquette is to a certain extent abolished, and the people are allowed to feel, for a moment, some relaxation from the chilling severity of discipline and restraint. The past is forgotten, and in the enjoyments of the day they disregard the future, with its recurring harshness and oppression. Order and regularity are, however, never lost sight of, and violence and boisterous mirth do not disturb the general harmony; for the Russian, even when intoxicated, is cheerful and good-humoured.

The palace is thrown open to all indiscriminately, although, to observe something like propriety, there is an order that every one shall wear a kind of black mantle, or half domino; but it is not enforced, and the long suite of rooms is densely filled with all classes. The Imperial family, ranged in a circle at the end of the last saloon, surrounded by a crowd of ministers and other personages of rank, with the anxious crowd squeezing forward to gain a glimpse of the resplendent group, form a lovely picture in a rude and uncouth frame. No court in Europe can equal the display of beauty and grace concentrated in that circle, distinguished as every member of it is for personal attractions of the highest order. I confess that I lost much that was worth observing in the crowd, being fascinated by the

charms of the Imperial family, whom it is hardly possible to see collected excepting on this occasion. But I might have spared myself on that point, had I been aware of the strange custom of the day. It is a levée of the people, and not of the sovereign: they assemble to congratulate him by their presence; and, reversing the order of etiquette, he presents himself and family to them. At occasional intervals he leads forth the Empress, and, followed by his family and court, passes through the different rooms amidst the bearded crowd, which falls back and leaves an avenue for them to pass. The great singularity of this ceremony is increased by the strong contrast between the chief performers and the spectators; the latter with their flowing beards and long blue caftans, and the former in all the splendour and magnificence of princely dignity. The Emperor, as I saw him, was conspicuous by the simplicity of his dress; wearing the red coat of the cuirassiers of the guard, with a single star, while others were covered with decorations: but among the ladies, blazing as they were with jewels and the insignia of their different orders, the Empress stood distinguished by a splendid tiara of diamonds, and a necklace of single pearls of the most extraordinary size. The national court dress is seldom worn, and then only by express command.

The attachment and affection of the Emperor to his family are of the purest character, and

prove that the sovereign can forget in the father the policy which dictates his conduct to his people: for their happiness he discards every ambitious project or state alliance, which, while it might add to what he most covets, would perhaps doom them to the misery and distress of an ill-assorted match; and thus he allows them without constraint to form alliances of affection and choice.

Mark the contrast of a few years in the lives and fortunes of some individuals. Napoleon raised himself and family to thrones and dominion, and history alone is left to record the fact; while they, having performed their vivid and comet-like course, have sunk into exile and unobtrusive privacy. He repudiated Josephine, whose exquisite grace and perception assisted so much in establishing his empire in the minds of the French, and sought to perpetuate his dynasty by connecting himself with the daughter of the proudest house in Europe. His prestige failed him; for, when his throne departed from him like a shadow, his Imperial consort forsook his fortunes, and eventually humbled herself by a marriage with her own chamberlain; while the descendants of the neglected Josephine, rising superior to the frowns of fate, were taking firm root in the soil, and flourishing in commanding and powerful positions. Of the two descendants of Eugène Beauharnois, one is married to the eldest daughter

of the Emperor Nicholas, and the other is Queen of Sweden.

But to return to the fête. In the gardens the most unrestricted liberty is allowed; and, although no portion of them is withheld from the public, neither trespass on good manners nor wilful mischief occurs. The itinerant dealers in fruits and drinks erect their stalls on the most ornamental lawns, and the tea-booths occupy the most favourite recesses: the very sentinels, who are at all times sufficiently numerous, seem to be at their posts as a mere matter of form, and to have forgotten their usual warning, "eto ne pozvoleno" (it is not permitted), to the trespassers on their beats. The waterworks are one of the chief attractions; and, connected with them, in a sequestered part of the garden, is a large metal tree, which, in the subdued light of the spot, is not readily distinguished from an actual and living specimen. By means of minute pipes water is made to pass through every branch to the extremities of the leaves, and the ground around it being intersected with a quantity of hidden springs, the valves open on the pressure of the foot, and drench the unfortunate victim decoyed within its limits. This is naturally an abundant source of fun and amusement.

Towards evening the crowds begin to concentrate themselves in the main avenue, in expectation to witness the *promenade en voiture*,

which takes place in the full blaze of the illuminations. Preceded by a few mounted cuirassiers, the Imperial family, the members of the court, and the numerous guests of the day, in the most gorgeous dresses and uniforms, seated in open carriages, called "lineas,"* drawn by four horses each, make the circuit of the gardens. No description can realise the pomp and magnificence of this extraordinary procession; its similitude is only to be found in the tales of the Arabian Nights. The assembled multitudes form into lines to allow the carriages to pass, and preserve the most respectful silence. We do not understand in England how to show our enthusiasm in silence, but in this country it is otherwise; cheering is here confined to the military, and with them to one simple shout, which, trained as they are to the most minute points of discipline, is given by command, and uttered as one voice, prompt and true. I saw a curious instance of this at the review at Krasnoe Selo. While riding in front of the troops, then drawn up in line, the Emperor received a dispatch from the Empress (who was in Germany for her health): he at once com-

* This singular carriage is an open one on four wheels, holding twelve persons, and has exactly the appearance of two old-fashioned sofas joined back to back, with a footboard or step running the whole length for the feet; thus the occupants naturally ride sideways, as in an Irish jaunting car.

municated to them that it contained intelligence of her improvement, and, simultaneously, regiment by regiment took up the shout in the most just accord, and with dramatic effect.

The illuminations are on an immense scale, and so well organised, that, on a signal rocket being thrown up, several hundreds of men are seen swarming over the frameworks, like great spiders, and in less than half an hour all is light. It is impossible to give an idea of the number of lights; but the quantity of tallow consumed is estimated at 5000*l.*, and the extent of ground covered at five miles: every avenue has its walls of light, in various devices, on frames from twelve to fifteen, and in some instances even forty feet high, continued in one unbroken line on each side. Two prodigious arcades of fire extend along the canal in front of the palace, and terminate by a cascade, lighted in the inside, so as to produce the effect of a curtain of fire. Besides these were summer-houses, pyramids, and temples of flame, and beyond all appeared the yacht frigates of the naval cadets in the same brilliant and dazzling ornaments.

Nothing can be better calculated to produce that giddy and tumultuous feeling of mingled wonder and delight, which, though it arises from neither the understanding nor the heart, has yet a most powerful influence over both. There is so little obscurity at this season of the year that the

illuminations could not produce their full effect, were it not for a black vapour, which, arising from such a multitude of lamps, and hanging over the gardens, causes a deep gloom, increased by the natural density of the foliage of the trees.

Weeks are spent in preparing this spectacle. There is no one to hint at economy, nor to complain of the lavish expenditure; and all return home satisfied—from the mechanic, who has satiated himself in one of the numerous tents publicly provided by the Emperor for the refreshment of the people, to the common mujik, who has only regaled his eyes.

A fearful catastrophe happened on this anniversary in 1839, by one of those sudden hurricanes which occasionally occur in the Gulf, when 2000 people were supposed to have perished on their way to the fête. I sailed from Cronstadt for England on that day, and was, happily, out of the reach of its influence; but an eye-witness told me that its effect was so powerful that he saw a large portion of the iron roof of the naval arsenal at St. Petersburg rolled up like paper and carried away many yards. There was no appearance in the heavens to indicate its approach; it was unaccompanied by rain, and fortunately was not of long duration. So completely are all things mystified and kept from the knowledge of the Russian public, without any assignable reason or object, that even in this instance, when distress was

at its height, and mourners could not be blinded to their calamity, the police were instructed to put the deaths at one hundred: but the fact could not be concealed, although human evidence was suppressed; for the waters continued for many days to give up their dead regardless of the edict.

More recently a collision took place on the Tsarskoe Selo railroad of a very fatal description, of which the survivors were able to give positive details, and to speak with some certainty as to the number of lives lost: but again the system of duplicity was practised, and although nearly one hundred people perished, they were assessed at six individuals by the police; who guarded the spot, and refused all approach to it till every trace of the accident had been removed.

This policy of deceit is inexplicable; for instead of calming the public mind, suspicion is engendered, and the universal impression naturally is, that a fault has been committed by the authorities, which they try to gloss over: besides, the disclosure of the truth involves no political principle. The system of falsehood thus sanctioned influences materially and mischievously the character of the people, whose duplicity is a national vice; they feel that to lie is but the performance of a needful duty, and that the utterance of truth, even in the most trifling subjects, is a defiance of the authorities. It is impossible to place the slightest reliance on any information which you

may receive; for, either from fear, or from a desire to mislead and to perplex the ideas of strangers, they overcolour their statement or pervert the truth in some way. Accustomed by habit to disguise the truth to others, they arrive at last at the point of not perceiving the evil in themselves, excepting through a veil, which hourly thickens its folds. They deceive you without mistrust of discovery, and utter falsehoods with the ingenuousness of candour. It would be curious to ascertain (if it were possible) at what period falsehood ceases to be estimated as a crime, for it must have an early origin in those who live by fear.

The sanctity of a promise, even, is no guarantee of good faith; and, as its fulfilment was never contemplated, forgetfulness offers no excuse for its violation. Habit tolerates the principle, and self-interest unblushingly excuses the abuse, notwithstanding its criminality and the heart-breaking consequences it entails. It is well known that the head of a noble house promised to emancipate a family of peasants at the ransom of the large sum of 50,000 roubles; but, having received the money, he continued to keep the deluded victims among the serfs on his estate.

Such is the school of honesty and good faith in which the Russian peasants are instructed under the crushing despotism of the aristocracy, despite the controlling influence of autocratical despotism. The latter rules by forms, orders, and

will; but the former grasps at substantialities and disregards verbalities. No monarch so flattered is less obeyed, and more deceived, than the self-styled autocrat of the Russian empire: disobedience and contempt are dangerous; but the country is vast, and silence reigns in its solitude.

The frankness and candour which characterise other nations are in Russia superseded by an inimical surveillance, a scrutinising malignity, a jealous censoriousness, and a sarcastic and suspicious reserve, which create universal apprehension and mistrust. The severity of the government, and the system of espionage, engender gloom and depression of the spirits and continual misgivings. There is ever present an undefinable dread of some one or of something, which is the greater because it has a cause, though the precise ground of alarm is unknown. This fear is not avowed, but it cannot be concealed, particularly from the watchful scrutiny of a person of quick and intelligent observation. A Russian's first advances to you are marked by an apparent forwardness, akin to the hospitality of the East; but even in this officious reception there is more ostentation than cordiality: they scrutinise the most trifling remarks, and submit the most insignificant actions to a critical examination; watching the effect of their observations, tracing the impression they produce on your credence, and divining your very

thoughts by the searching glance of their cold, penetrating eye.

True greatness of mind has its recompense within itself, and what it loses by disinterestedness it gains in power: elsewhere it operates beneficially on mankind; but here it would be baneful, because it would be looked upon as a blind and a pretence. Clemency is mistaken for weakness, by a people rendered callous by fear: fear alone subdues them; implacable severity humbles them to the dust; but pardon, on the contrary, would render them presumptuous. It is impossible to convince them, and therefore they must be driven into subjection: they rebel at mildness, and obey harshness, which they mistake for power. This explains the system of government adopted by the Emperor, who knows and feels what is essentially necessary to enforce obedience by his power; and, probably, he dares not follow his natural good disposition, owing to a belief that it would be dangerous to manifest feelings too exalted for the people to comprehend and appreciate. Everything is gloomy and silent in Russia: the reciprocal mistrust of the government and the people dispels all mirth. The minds of the people are drilled, and their feelings weighed and measured, as if every pleasure and passion had to answer for their actions to some rigid confessor in the disguise of an agent of police. But this does not disturb the general routine of things,

which is the more durable, and appears to be the more firmly established, because it resembles, in its mysterious and inevitable power, death itself: that which retains life cannot be exterminated, and thus the Russian reverence for despotism involves an idea of eternal existence and omnipotent power.

LETTER XIV.

Russia and Asia compared.— Sudden Rise of Russia.— Slow Growth of National Institutions.— Despotic and Republican Governments.— Russian Revolutions.— Policy of the Nobles.— Condition and Sufferings of the Serfs.— Despotism of the Landlords.— Premature Civilisation of Peter the Great.— Russian Prevarication on Capital Punishments.— The Knout.— "Running the Gauntlet."— Russian Inquisitiveness and Treachery.— Accidental Rencontre with the Emperor.— Gardens of Tsarskoe Selo.— Old Palace of the Empress Catherine.— Imperial Collections of Works of Art.— The Fine Arts in Russia.— Diplomatic Tact of the Russians.

THERE is less known of Russia than of Asia, and it has been less often described; but it is, nevertheless, as curious a field as Asia itself, even with regard to the arts and the economy of the people, and especially in relation to history. Asia, the cradle of the human race, and once the seat of civilisation and dominion, has little more than the historical tradition of its greatness left to it. the tide of empire and of science has ebbed away from its shores, and gradual decay in its institutions and influence has marked its progress. Russia, on the contrary, unknown, save as a horde of barbarians, plunged in ignorance, and restricted within the limits of its inhospitable climate, has

struggled out of the frightful mist which surrounded it, and extending its domains, and advancing onward with giant steps in the race for power, claims a precedence among nations and a right to interfere in the councils of the world. While Europe already held the sceptre of dominion in her hand, the fruit of her exertions for many successive ages, Russia still lay bound in the Scythian gloom of her forests, unillumed by the rays of civilisation and social order. Centuries of conquest, the combination of events, and the successful struggle against the jealousies and aggressions of other nations, formed the ordeal through which the empires of Europe had to pass, before they could consolidate their strength and establish securely their domestic government. History teems with the portentous records of those days of difficulty and contention, and time has set the imprint of antiquity upon them. But Russia burst from its torpor at the bidding of one man, and entered at once into the ranks of European civilisation, leaving the dark pages of her domestic feuds and blood-stained tyranny for the new and vigorous career she was preparing to enter upon. In the short space of one hundred and fifty years Russia has overleaped the landmarks of time, and, knowing no infancy, has sprung, Minerva-like, from the brain of one man, into full maturity, and in rivalry with the rest of Europe. Her true history as a nation dates from

Peter the Great, and no other kingdom can record equal advances, or more powerful influence obtained within so short a time; years in her calendar are centuries in that of the world.

A comparison between the different states of Europe shows that those which have clung to their time-honoured institutions, introducing only such improvements as circumstances and events have rendered necessary, without disturbing the foundations of the fabric, have ridden safely over the billows of every storm, and increased in vigour and prosperity; while their more volatile neighbours, carried away by Utopian theories of the rights of man, are ever building up new schemes of government, and introducing dangerous experiments and innovations, to the destruction of all social order and stable good.

I remember to have read somewhere, I think in Alison's History of Europe, the following passage, the truth and justice of which struck me so forcibly that it has become fixed in my memory: —"Human institutions are not like the palace of the architect, framed according to fixed rules, capable of erection in any situation and certain in the effect to be produced. They resemble rather the trees of the forest, slow of growth, tardy of development, and readily susceptible of destruction. An instant will destroy what it will take centuries to produce; and centuries must again elapse before, in the same situation, a

similar production can be formed. Transplantation, difficult in the vegetable, is impossible in the moral world; the seedling must be nourished in the soil, inured to the climate, and hardened by the winds. Many examples are to be found of institutions being suddenly imposed upon a people; none of those so formed having any long duration. To be adapted to their character and habits, they must have grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength."

This preamble is the result of the reflections which have forced themselves upon me in studying the government of Russia; particularly as regards its organisation and its effects. Russia exhibits the extraordinary paradox of a government formed without reference to the opinions of its subjects; and without availing itself of the experience of the past to improve its system. The pupillage of a nation, that is, its helpless dependance on the absolute will of one man, and its subjection to the oppressive tyranny of a proud oligarchy, have always fettered its moral advancement and restricted its energies; and thus we find that, by throwing off the feudal yoke, its people have emerged from a state of ignorance and servile fear, and have established that limited monarchy and representative form of government, which is the essence of liberty, from its division of power and its spirit of mutual control. The two extremes, namely, the despotic and republican

forms of government, are equally dangerous and unsound; the one concentrating every power within itself, and perverting it to its own selfish aggrandisement, and the other bending and varying with every caprice of the people, and having no stability, owing to the transient authority of its rulers, and their anxiety to court popular applause.

The extent of the Russian empire and the paucity of population over its surface as compared to that extent, are the great drawbacks to any organised plan for remodelling its form of government; and, although it has witnessed more revolutions than any other country, and its nobles have not hesitated in more than one instance to remove by violence their obnoxious sovereigns, yet they have never attempted any innovation nor any change in their polity, but have quietly allowed the old order of things to be resumed, when the direction and dictation of them was in their own hands. The reason for this is obvious; for although fear for their personal safety might compel them to destroy the dreaded tyrant, yet the preservation of their own power and possessions depended on the maintenance of that form which could alone secure them. The emancipation of their serfs would have been the immediate and necessary result of a change in the system of government; and thus their own interests are the surest guarantee for the perpetuation of absolutism.

The ignorance and abject humility of the serfs are the strongest securities against any efforts of their own towards rational freedom; and the impossibility of their uniting in sufficient numbers in so scattered a population renders any organised conspiracy hopeless.

The Russians attempt to prove to you that the condition of their serfs is enviable compared to that of the peasants in other countries. It is a miserable deception. In the distant and sequestered departments thousands of families pass through all the horrors of starvation, and perish from misery and the effects of brutality. Human nature suffers universally in Russia; but the men who form the staple of the soil have the hardest lot. It is in vain to contend that they are entitled to the necessaries of life, when they have not the power to enforce the fulfilment of this illusive privilege. The truth is stifled under the fallacious, though specious, axiom, that it is to the interest of a master to provide for his creatures: but it is not every man who understands and appreciates his interests. In other societies, and among other people, the bad economist ruins himself, and the evil extends no farther; but here, as human life constitutes the wealth of an individual, whole villages and cantons fall victims to the improvidence and recklessness of their owner. It is true that the government steps in and applies a remedy for these evils, by

placing the estates in trust, when it is aware of the mischief; but this tardy relief cannot restore the dead. Picture to yourself the mass of unknown sufferings and iniquities produced by such customs, under such a government and in such a climate! The despotism of these landlords is more aggravated than that of the Emperor himself; because, from being withdrawn from the public eye, it is not controlled by the fear of public opinion. The spirit of despotism is not to be found in the equality of its victims, but in their ignorance of the value of freedom and in their fear of tyranny. The power of an absolute master is a monster always ready to affiliate a worse, namely the tyranny of the people. Democratic anarchy cannot be of long duration, for its very elements, Massaniello-like, involve its own downfal; but the systematic operation of the abuses of autocracy perpetuate from generation to generation, under the mask of benevolence, moral anarchy, the worst of evils, and material obedience, the most dangerous of virtues.

The besotted pride of the rulers is intoxicated with the idea of civilisation without being civilised themselves; and thus it is with a nation as with an individual, the mind must work and prepare itself by study and reflection before it can taste the sweets of cultivation. The creation of the world out of chaos was possible to the Deity alone, and it is superhuman to arrogate to them-

selves the power of exercising civilisation, when they themselves have hardly emerged from the condition of a horde disciplined by terror and governed by barbarians.

The root of all these evils lies in the false and premature system of civilisation adopted by Peter 150 years since: Russia will feel for years the effects of the pride of that man. He possessed a diamond of inappreciable value, but in his impatience to add lustre to his crown, he devoted it to his purposes in its rough and unpolished state. The glory which history has attached to his name is the object of emulation by his successors, who seek to resemble him by perpetuating his false polity; and who yet have failed in perceiving that the result of his labour has been to give an artificial surface to society—the varnish of refinement upon the rude nature of barbarism—with a view to make the nation appear civilised, before he had moulded the character of the people, by developing their capabilities with judgment, according to their quality and means of action.

Labouring always to maintain more than their true position, and to assume a superiority over other nations in this very point of civilisation, the touchstone of the strength and virtues of a people—and which, notwithstanding their self-sufficiency and *amour propre*, they know is their falling weakness—the Russians boast, with feelings akin to those of a slave, who believes himself virtually

free because released from his fetters, that the punishment of death is unknown among them. It is hardly possible to believe in such infatuation, or to conceive so stolid a perversion of the truth; for although, *au pied de la lettre*, judicial death forms no part of their penal code, yet the mode of administering punishment is as sure to entail it as if the sentence were fatal. No prevarication can be more impudent: it is the cry of "stop thief" raised by the robber himself to shield his own crime. The Russians raise the standard of humanity, while they are inflicting tortures, under the cruelty of which the lacerated victim dies a hundred deaths. The distinction made in the sentence of the punishment awarded, exposes in its full deformity this monstrous and presumptuous quibble.

The secrets of the knout are not supposed to transpire, and its horrors, therefore, count for nothing with these advocates for humanity. Europe does not witness its infliction, and thus the appearance of the mildness of their tribunals is maintained. A few blows of this weapon applied laterally across the loins produce certain death; and this is not of rare occurrence: in its less fatal shape it is inflicted longitudinally down the back, leaving indelible marks, as of a red-hot iron. This is but the first instalment of the doom allotted to the culprit in Siberia.

The invention of torture has, however, not stopped here; for there is, if possible, a still more

atrocious contrivance of barbarism in existence, termed "running the gauntlet." The law inflicts no capital punishment, as if its regard for human life was strictly sincere, and at variance with the general indifference manifested in its behalf throughout the empire; but it ordains a punishment beyond the power of the human frame to sustain, and if the victim sinks, as sink he must, the vaunted mildness of the judicature is upheld under the miserable plea that he perished from physical causes, and from no intentional result of the sentence. It is principally a military punishment, inflicted on the offender by his own comrades, through whose ranks he is dragged, receiving from each man a blow with a heavy cane, till either he has undergone the many hundreds of strokes awarded him and perished from their effects, or the power of endurance failing him, nature anticipates the brutality of his executioners, and terminates his existence on the spot. This is no over-drawn picture; but its truth is not generally known, because the infamous and formidable discipline of the knout has superseded all other Russian punishments in the imagination of civilised Europe. The Janus-like aspect of this country is one of its most remarkable characteristics: one might forgive the duplicity, were it not for a consciousness one feels of being thought the dupe of such miserable sophistry.

Delicacy of sentiment is vainly sought for in the catalogue of Russian virtues: the people do not fall into the offensiveness of American vulgarity, but they are equally as pertinacious in their mode of questioning; the familiarity of which is not at all congenial to the pride and habitual reserve of the English character. Their inquisitiveness amounts to intrusion, from its personal character; and to an unguarded person, led away by the seeming interest of the questioner to reply in a tone of frankness, the most dangerous consequences might ensue. I was made a principal in one of these inquisitorial conversations a few days since, while going by the railroad to Tsarskoe Selo: the object of my visit to Russia, my ideas of the country and its institutions, the opinion entertained in England of the reigning dynasty, and the effect produced by the visit of the Hereditary Grand Duke, were all most pointedly asked, and, I being on my guard, were as astutely answered. You might well charge me with being guilty of insincerity in the course I adopted; but you must remember that. I had to look to my own safety, and that my surest course was to clothe myself in the habitual hypocrisy of the country. I have since had the whole conversation reported to me by a friend, who had heard it in another quarter, with the remark that I was *vrai aristocrat!* Thus it is in Russia; where, to use an old French saying, one must be *plus loyal*

que le roi, or be utterly mute, to avoid suspicion and consequent risk.

At Tsarskoe Selo I had the fortune to meet the Emperor in a retired part of the gardens, *en negligé;* I say fortune, because, demi-god as he is, it is unusual to see him in mortal guise, undistinguished by the trappings of royalty, and the proud bearing and theatrical deportment habitual to him. I was at his side without recognising him in his loose surtout and travelling cap, strolling along in deep contemplation; and it was not till our eyes met, that I felt his presence, — yes, *felt* is the only applicable term; for it is impossible to withstand his eagle glance without an indefinable sensation of awe. He had just arrived from Moscow, and being almost unsusceptible of fatigue, I met him again in the course of my walk, driving the Empress in a little garden carriage.

The gardens at Tsarskoe are laid out with great elegance and effect, in the landscape style, and are the only really unartificial things in the domain: the little armoury, and the dairy-farm stocked with Durham cattle, are in excellent taste. But the old palace, the seat of the orgies of the Empress Catherine, is the most extravagant and fantastic structure conceivable. The prominent parts of the exterior of the building have been at one time gilt, but the effects of time and climate have removed every trace of gold, and nothing remains

but the yellow coating on which the precious metal was laid. Internally, childish fancy and barbaric splendour are so blended, that Napoleon's celebrated saying, "*du sublime au ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas,*" wrung from him by feigned indifference to his Russian disasters, might with great justice be applied to this display of former Russian taste. Incongruity reigns throughout the apartments, and the most violent extremes are brought into close contact. In one room the walls, and even the bedstead, are of glass, in another they are coated with amber, in a third they are covered with japan-work; and, as if to outvie in extravagance even these costly and absurd whims, another room is bedecked with a kind of patchwork of pictures by the old masters, to the destruction of effect, symmetry and arrangement. In the confusion of objects thus created, it is almost impossible to form any opinion of their value; and the judgment is besides disturbed by the regret of seeing such costly articles applied as a casing to the walls, disfiguring what they ought to ornament.

The value and number of works of art by the old masters, contained in the Imperial collections, is hardly known to the generality of Europe, but they are very considerable and ever on the increase; the active agents of the Emperor in different countries never neglecting to procure the finest specimens as they become saleable. The

Russians point with pride to these additions, as a proof of their superior wealth and magnificence; but like the jewel in the dunghill, they are of little value to those who seek the grain of corn in the substantialities and enjoyments of life. The craving for splendour and effect, like a gaudy binding to a book of blank leaves, is only meant to dazzle the eye while it deceives the imagination. There is an old anecdote of a lunatic who, believing himself in the possession of unbounded riches, and the luxuries of a well-appointed kitchen, complained that everything tasted of gruel, which indeed was his only fare; and thus it is with the Russians: display and external grandeur give the appearance of substantial wealth and happiness, but, alas! it is a hollow mockery; for these are but a glittering veil thrown over the sense to conceal the nakedness of the land, of which the people themselves are unconscious. Their sovereign physician may gild the pill as he will, but the knowledge of its bitter ingredients is to the healthy taste revolting *usque ad nauseam.*

The fine arts are certainly in a most flourishing state, in the Russian definition of the term; that is, there are immense buildings called Academies and Institutions with a full staff of professors; the students are all dressed in a semi-military uniform and go punctually through the discipline of their studies: the outward effect is perfect; but not so the inward result. Is it from an inherent

defect of the system, or from the effects of the climate, or from both, that any real advancement in the arts remains a dead letter? The latter certainly has its influence, for the oblique rays of a northern sun have never yet succeeded in kindling the fires of creative fancy; and where they have faintly glimmered, the spark has been kindled from more genial sources. The former, however, is the ruling cause, for the arts, to flourish, must be free: as inspirations of the mind, they refuse coercion and the fettered discipline of system; they cannot be drilled into a mere mechanical routine of existence. The genius of Brunow warmed into something like life during his residence and studies in Italy, but his powers chilled and gradually forsook him on his return, and he is now reported to have abandoned the easel and to have fallen into a course of vicious intemperance. His large picture of the Destruction of Pompeii is finely conceived, but is loaded with too much of the theatrical effect peculiar to the French school.

A large painting of the Raising of the Serpent in the Wilderness has been deposited in a room of the Winter Palace, to which the public were permitted to have access. It is meritorious as a Russian work of art: but there all praise must cease, for it is utterly deficient in all poetic feeling and grandeur of conception. Moses and Aaron are reduced to mere shadowy forms, standing at

the entrance of a cave in the middle ground, while the serpent, moulded into the form of a capital roman S, is perched on the top of an elaborately finished Ionic stone column! To say nothing of the anachronism, a strict adherence to the description in the Vulgate would have shown a higher feeling, if not a better taste; but the picture is otherwise full of defects both in the grouping and attitudes of the people: the former is not sufficiently massed, and the latter gives the idea of worship rather than of obedience and awe.

Nature on the one hand, and their form of government on the other, have set limits to the mental power of the Russians in most respects; but have compensated to them in some degree by endowing them with one qualification in which they are unequalled. The intellect, undisturbed by the acquirement of lighter and more elegant pursuits of life, has been able to concentrate itself on one point; which habit, derived from a sense of necessity, has rendered perfect. Accustomed to observation of character, and to dissimulation and the concealment of their own feelings; eschewing sincerity as a most dangerous evil; they are unmatched as diplomatists: indeed their quick perception, habitual cunning, and unbounded fertility in resources, render the art natural to them without study or practice. It is not a mere political science with them, but one which also enters into the daily transactions of life, and forms the

groundwork of their general dealings. The German epithet of Menschenkennern is exactly applicable to them, for their knowledge of the human character is astonishing, considering that it can only be derived from a source presenting ever apparently the same monotonous and disciplined aspect. They possess all the elements necessary to make them the most expert chess-players: in fact the empire is to them an immense table, on which they are studying their own moves as well as watching those of their opponents; the very pieces, in the actions assigned to them, being figurative of their own restricted motions and powers.

LETTER XV.

Centralisation of Russia.—Supplies for the Capital.—Oxen of the Ukraine.—Frozen Market of St. Petersburg.—Loss from a Thaw.—Pyramids of frozen Grouse.—Division of Labour and Benefit.—Shipping Trade of Cronstadt.—Heavy Duties on Exports.—Railroads and Steam Communication introduced into Russia.—Exportation of Corn from Russia.—Prohibitory Duties on Imports.—Duties paid on Russian Produce by England.—Smuggling.—Barriers.—Influx of Adventurers to Russia.—Imperial Encouragement of Warlike Implements.—Bribery essential to Success.—Fraudulent Appropriation of the Ideas of Projectors.—Population of the Russian Empire.—Proportion of Serfs.—Standing Army.—Discipline of Despotism.

RUSSIA may be said to combine two points of centralisation; namely, the Emperor and his capital; the latter as the focus from which everything radiates or converges, and the former as the oracle towards which every hope and object are directed: but it is to the latter I now wish to draw your attention. Statistically speaking, this centralisation manifests itself in a most extraordinary manner; for the whole energies of the empire, to its remotest parts, are occupied with the means of furnishing the capital with supplies. The position of the city in the midst of a

boundless morass, and the effects of the climate rendering besides any produce from the already ungrateful soil an impossibility; it is entirely dependant on the distant provinces for every article of consumption. Like ants, the people are compelled to exercise their foresight in preparations against the winter, and to lay in those stores which from their bulk can only reach them by water conveyance from the south. Water-melons and the choice fruits are brought up from the governments beyond Moscow; for the climate at St. Petersburg so far forbids any produce of the kind that cherries must be grown under glass. Immense herds of oxen are constantly arriving in succession from the Ukraine; the meat, notwithstanding the length of the journey, although not fat, is good and succulent, but the mutton is scarce and bad. These oxen are fine large beasts, of an uniform pale slate colour, with black muzzles and hoofs and crescent-shaped horns; and it strikes me that the introduction of the breed into this country would be beneficial to our graziers. The importation of Flemish horses has certainly improved our beasts of heavy draught, and why should not the Russian cattle produce an equally good result? In the summer, matters proceed smoothly enough, and it would be imagined that winter would present insuperable difficulties and obstacles to the arrival of supplies; but the reverse is the case, as that season becomes in fact the purveyor

of delicacies which can be procured at no other time.

The Frozen Market, as it is called, is perhaps one of the most remarkable sights in St. Petersburg. It begins at Christmas, and lasts till the thaw is about to set in. The produce of the sale of the commodities it contains, furnishes the means of existence to districts at many hundreds of miles from the metropolis, even to the shores of the White Sea: but still it is a matter of speculation, for the winters in Russia are not always severe enough, as regards the fall of snow, to allow of the transit of the sledges. Should the snow set in late, or fail the peasants after they are well advanced on their journey,—for of course both the snow and the winter are earlier and less variable in the more northern parts — the goods perish and are destroyed on the road. As soon as the winter commences, thousands of sledges leave the districts bordering on the White Sea, laden with the frozen carcases of pigs, goats, reindeer and oxen, the white hare, the capercailzie, and other indigenous species of grouse, cod fish, beleuga, sturgeon and a multitude of other fish, all frozen to that extent that they yield only to the hatchet and saw. This journey, of three or four thousand versts*, occupies some time, and the great object of the peasants is to arrive at its

* A verst is about three quarters of an English mile.

termination by Christmas-day: but, as I have just stated, they occasionally find the snow fail them as they work south, and thus the passage of their sledges is stopped. If but a momentary interval of mild weather occurs, thaw affects their perishable commodities, decay begins, and the local police interfering, all the provisions are burnt, as unfit for food and to prevent infection. The loss is incalculable to the poor man; and the want of the usual supply is severely felt in the metropolis. An instance of this occurred to some extent in the winter of 1841; during the whole of which the thermometer hardly fell below zero of Fahrenheit.

The Russians divide their winter into two periods, distinguished as the little and the great: the former, which is comparatively speaking mild, and interrupted by occasional thaws and rains, lasts till the new year; when the frost sets in without a check, reaching its greatest severity in February; this they term the great winter. It is therefore to the vicissitudes of the little winter that the speculators in frozen goods are subject. A large field at the entrance of the city, and one of the public squares, are the spots where the Frozen Market takes place. The different elements seem to have exhausted themselves in furnishing the immense and varied supplies, which are somewhat tastefully arranged, although the general appearance is not tempting; there are no

booths nor shops, but everything is *en plein air*, piled up in the sledges or built up in layers. It appears like exaggeration to say that the grouse are heaped in pyramids by thousands: but so it is; and they meet with a ready sale. The buyers store them in their ice-cellars by dozens, and keep them thus till the ensuing summer, when they are thawed by being plunged into cold water, and prove good eating.

Note the impetus given to the different parts of the empire to provide for this capital, denuded of the commonest self-resource; and remark, besides, how equally the benefits are divided by the advantage so skilfully taken of the season. In the winter, as we have seen, the hardy people of the extreme north are on the alert, while the more southern provinces are reduced to inactivity. In the summer huge droves of cattle are brought up from the Ukraine, water-melons and fruits from Odessa and Astrachan, and corn from Tambof; hay, piled up into vast stacks of many tons weight, is floated in barges from the interior; and firewood, principally of the birch tree, cut into billets ready for the stove, follows in a similar manner. The construction of these barges, and the felling of the trees, are the principal employments of the peasantry during the winter months. As the barges never return, but are broken up for firewood, they are most roughly put together and barely water-tight; indeed they

would not be safe with any other cargo. Besides all these local demands on the industry of the people, the foreign trade takes off an enormous quantity of merchandise, both raw and manufactured, which finds its way into the city for shipment; but, as I have before told you, it is nowhere seen. The appearance of St. Petersburg hardly warrants the fact that upwards of fifteen hundred ships leave Cronstadt annually with cargoes during the short summer season; and doubtless the number would be even greater, but for some unwise fiscal restrictions of the Emperor. Many American ships which arrive sugar-laden return empty, because the heavy export duties on cordage, duck, and sailcloth, drive them to other countries; indeed, generally speaking, the whole commerce of the empire has received a severe blow by the recent addition the Emperor has made to the duties on all goods exported, in the belief that he stands without a competitor, and that all other countries must come to him from necessity.

The Emperor is now preparing two of the greatest boons he can bestow upon his empire, which will not only affect most beneficially the internal resources of the country, but all Russia itself: they will be the first real impetus ever given to its positive civilisation, by teaching the people the best means of taking advantage of their soil, instructing them in the use of machinery, and spreading the knowledge of medicine, manu-

factures, and the arts necessary to life. These are a railroad from St. Petersburg to Moscow, and a steam communication on the Volga, from Tver to Astrachan. They are both equivalent to a new creation of the resources of the country. Russia abounds in a multitude of productions which have been hardly available, and if at all, only by a most tedious and expensive process, through the want of conveyance; minerals, the exuberance of her harvest, and the vast variety of its vegetable products will now be brought to ready markets. The most fertile part of the country will be approximated with the most barren, and the chief difficulty of travelling the enormous distances from city to city, will be almost extinguished. The communication of intelligence, a matter of singular importance in advancing civilisation in Russia, will also operate most beneficially on the moral state of the people.

In an agricultural point of view, as regards the exportation of corn, Russia takes the lead of all other countries of Europe in the following proportions:—

	Quarters.
Russia - - -	672,500
Prussia - - -	635,964
Germany and Hamburg -	538,000
Sicily - - -	200,000
Denmark - - -	175,000
Sweden - - -	1,000

The average price may be taken at 40*s.* 6*d.* per qr., free on board. Commercial treaties are doubtless most valuable as securing the reciprocal good faith of nations, and establishing their relations on a firm basis; and they are also necessary as establishing mutual privileges to the exclusion of other nations, whose domestic policy is of too prohibitory a character. In her anxiety to promote her own manufactures Russia has affixed a scale of duties on all foreign merchandize, so nearly approaching to prohibition, that her imports are most inconsiderable; and at the same time she charges heavily on her exports, because she feels she has almost the entire monopoly of them. Self interest is the first object of every state, and Russia is not at all disposed to change her policy from mere motives of mistaken philanthropy. Drugs, coals, indigo, and a few other minor articles, are all she receives from England; which in return takes more than half of the produce she exports.

	Ships.
England sends yearly to St. Petersburgh about	800
America - - - -	70
France - - - -	70
The rest of Europe and other parts - -	560

The following table will give you an idea of the quantity of the exports to England only, and of the amount of duty levied upon them.

	Poods.*		Roubles.
Hemp - -	1,015,259		102,540
Flax - -	553,374		75,220
Tallow - -	2,793,556		620,726
Potashes -	5,499		304
Bristles - -	39,719		5,734
Isinglass -	2,174	}	3,647
Samovy - -	715	}	
Glue - -	688		37
Wool - -	34,468		Free
Horse-tails -	3,441		2,605
Horse-manes -	689		521
Hides, raw -	83,967		67,744
Hides, tanned -	572		Free
Cordage -	17,674		"
Ropes, old -	20,053		"
Oakum - -	9,327		"
Bones - -	220,574		33,086
Tongues -	403		
Linseed - -	180,839	Tchetverts	50,227
Wheat - -	17,086	"	1,314
Cranberries -	1,926	Ank.	
Quills - -	2,215,675	"	
† Mats - -	73,324	"	2,199
Lathwood -	483,380	"	517
Deals - -	205,320	doz.	9,239
			975,660

silver roubles, equal to 150,000*l.*

* Pood is about 40 lbs.

† These mats are made from the bark of the Linden tree in the north-east of Russia, from the Onshas and the Wettught to Kamscatca. 14,000,000 are supposed to be made yearly, stripping 1,000,000 trees, and returning 3,000,000 silver roubles.

This sum the people of England annually pay for the privilege of the trade. In addition to these commodities, 457,416 yards of *crash*, together with other articles, are also taken; but I am not aware at this moment of the exact amount of duty they pay.

Smuggling, as you may imagine, and as I have mentioned on a previous occasion, is carried on to a very considerable extent; notwithstanding the cordon of custom-house officers drawn round the city, the nightly patrole of a mounted guard, and a vigilant look-out at the barriers of the city. These barriers are an adaptation of the German schlagbaum, and are always kept drawn across the road, and guarded by sentinels; whose duty it is to question the occupants of every carriage or other vehicle as to their destination of going out, and their point of departure if coming in. But it is an absurd practice; for, excepting in cases of suspicion, the carriage is never searched, and the general reply of "na datcha" (to my estate), is invariably sufficient to raise the machine.

Among the few travellers who resort to Russia, it is singular how large a proportion of them are attracted hither by a spirit of adventure; the munificence of the Emperor in rewarding those who place useful discoveries and inventions at his disposal on the one hand, and a general feeling which exists throughout both Europe and America,

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SLEDGE PASSING A BARRIER.

that in the low state of the arts and manufactures of Russia, there is a large field for the speculator in new systems and principles on the other, bring yearly a number of soi-disant inventors and planners. But few succeed; and the rest, after having waited for months, living on hopes never to be realised, although perhaps led on by specious promises of encouragement, abandon their attempts in utter hopelessness and despair. The invention of a gun on a new and good principle, however, or the improvement on any other warlike engine meet with immediate attention from the Emperor, and a princely reward satisfies the fortunate projector. These are matters of personal interest to him; but other schemes must pass through the tedious process of official scrutiny; and the authorities, without an exception, regulate their decision and opinions in proportion to the amount of substantial interest they become the recipients of individually. This iniquitous system has been the means of defeating many a well-conceived project and beneficial discovery; besides deterring men of high talent and great ability from devoting themselves to the wants of the country. It is an ordeal which few high-minded men will consent to submit to. Frequent instances occur of a suggestion being well received, and of its details and operations being honestly but unguardedly explained by its projector; and after the whole matter is fully understood, he civilly receives his congé, and is de-

frauded of his dues; his ideas being carried out by others, without either thanks or recompence to himself. Success can only be ensured, even after the payment of the necessary douceur, excepting by the deepest caution, and most jealous vigilance, by shrouding the ideas in the darkest and most impenetrable folds, to prevent their being daguerrotyped by the exquisite finesse and wily subtlety of these master-spirits of duplicity. The character of the people, like their soil, is without solidity; and it requires great knowledge and experience to avoid the dangers concealed by its treacherous surface.

In a former letter when describing the position of the serfs, I gave you some idea of their numbers, from an old census: a more recent one has just been published, which puts the total population of the Russian empire at fifty-three millions five hundred thousand souls; of which only eleven millions five hundred thousand are free people, and the remaining forty-two millions serfs: fifteen millions belonging to the crown, and twenty-seven millions to private individuals. Thus, only one man in five is free in Russia; and every tenth man is a soldier: the standing army being computed at 1,200,000; a force exceeding that of England, in proportion to its population, by 955,000 men; without a colony to protect, or a fortified town to defend. Large armies, amounting to 300,000 men, occupy Poland and are engaged in the Circassian

war: but the rest of this enormous host is distributed throughout the empire, to overawe and keep in due subjection the preponderating numbers of the serfs. Fifty-three millions of people are disciplined to conform to a government established, not for their benefit, but to secure to one man the unbounded privileges of rank, ambition, and power; from any participation in which, as the natural right and inheritance of mankind, they are peremptorily excluded.

LETTER XVI.

Russian Field Sports. — Wolf-Shooting. — Bear-Hunting. — Narrow Escape of a Sportsman. — An English "Leather-Stocking." — Elk Hunting. — The Lynx. — A White Fox. — Common Foxes. — White and other Hares. — Grouse, Water-Fowl. — Russia a rich Field for the Naturalist. — Furs. — In-door Dress. — Marriage Mart on Whit Monday. — Annual Promenade Days.

YOU may probably have imagined that in a country offering such a wide field to the sportsman, I have indulged in my favourite exercise, and been initiated into the mysteries of the northern sports; but, in truth, I have had but little opportunity. The winter sports are the most prominent and exciting, being confined principally to the elk, bear, and wolf; but it is necessary for a man to have his whole soul in the chase, and to be entirely devoted to its pleasures to enjoy them fully. There is no retreating when he is once in the field; therefore, he must be prepared for fatigue and exposure; and he must be possessed of nerve and presence of mind, as the pursuit is not devoid of danger.

The wolf is destroyed in a variety of ways: sometimes he is ridden down by two horsemen, whose horses, passing with ease and rapidity over the hard-frozen surface of the snow, soon bring

them abreast of him, when he is brought down by a pistol shot; and at other times he is enticed within gun-shot, by men driving in a sledge in the neighbourhood of his haunts, and dragging a bundle of hay behind them with a long cord, while a pig, which they have with them, is made to squeal. The wolf, attracted by the cries, and ravenous from hunger, pursues the object trailing behind, and is despatched by a rifle shot from the sledge. This sport can only be followed out on moonlight nights, and is particularly dangerous when several wolves join in pursuit of the sledge.

The elk and bear are "rung," as it is technically termed. The peasants take great pleasure in this process, and the more so as they obtain a handsome gratuity if they succeed in accomplishing the operation; which they will travel a hundred miles to communicate to any sportsman willing to avail himself of it; and there is no lack of them. Engaged, probably, in their daily vocation of felling wood, in places approachable only under the influence of the frost, they first perceive the track of the beast in the snow, and tracing it till it is lost in some wood or cover, they encircle the spot at some distance, to be satisfied that the game is safely lodged. This task is repeated for several successive days, with the most watchful eye for any fresh traces which might announce its escape, and if there be none, a messenger mounts his sledge and starts for St. Petersburg to sell his

discovery (if of a bear, for one hundred roubles), and return with the party of sportsmen to indicate the spot.

A crowd of peasants surround the place, and among them, at proper intervals, the marksmen take their stand. The dogs are turned in, and, if it be a bear, it is soon roused, and attempts to break the ring; an unsuccessful shot turns him back, to appear at another place, and if he be not fortunate enough to get clear, which seldom occurs, his doom is soon fixed. Sometimes there is a difficulty in dislodging him, and the hunters are compelled to enter the wood to face him in his own fastnesses; which is an affair of some danger, as he then often turns, and becomes the attacking party. A gentleman of my acquaintance had a very narrow escape of his life in one of these encounters; and, indeed, but for his strong nerve and high courage, he must have perished. In following up a wounded elk, he came most unexpectedly on a she bear, with two cubs of the previous summer by her side; he fired and missed, and, before he had time to defend himself, she rose at him, and struck him down, but left him in her anxiety for her cubs; he immediately got on his legs, and, firing again, wounded the beast, which again ran at him, threw him down in the struggle, tore his thigh with her hind claws, bit him severely through the arm and wrist, and, without relinquishing her grasp, stood over him,

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PERILOUS SITUATION OF A RUSSIAN SPORTSMAN.

holding him down. Notwithstanding the acute agony he was suffering, and his almost powerless condition, he contrived to draw his hunting knife, and to inflict a deep wound in the region of the heart of the beast; which he, however, just missed, as I saw afterwards on dissection. After this effort it appears he sank exhausted; but his friend, who had heard the shots from a little distance, having providentially hurried up, though fearfully alarmed at the state of his companion, went up to the head of the bear, and discharged his rifle into its brain. The animal fell dead on the body of his unconscious antagonist, who was immediately extricated and restored, and had nerve enough to travel home at speed, a distance of upwards of one hundred miles, to get the assistance there which it would have been in vain to have sought for in the wilds of the interior.

Single-handed pursuit is seldom ventured on; but an English gentleman in the Russian military service, who is a perfect "Leather-Stocking" in his habits and tastes, is said to prefer this mode, and will spend weeks alone in the woods. In the winter of 1841 I saw an immense bear of six hundredweight, which he had kept in pursuit of for two days. It is impossible to estimate the distance he traversed in that time; but the feet of the bear were rubbed raw by the continuance of its exertions. On another occasion, and when less experienced in the sport, he was shown a bear

sleeping in an exposed place under the fallen trunk of a tree. In order to approach the beast without disturbing it, and to prevent the sharp crackling sound of the snow, he took off his shoes and stockings, regardless of the intense cold, and on coming up to it, he found the animal so coiled up, and with its paws so drawn over its head, that a decisive shot was impossible. He unhesitatingly poked it with the muzzle of his piece, and on its arousing, destroyed it by a well directed shot in the head. His barrack-room at a Gatchina is no baronial hall, but trophies and weapons of the chase ornament its walls most characteristically.

The elk is a timid animal, and difficult of approach, frequenting the low and swampy spots in the woods; generally in small herds of seven or eight individuals. The same process of "ringing" and surrounding it is observed as with the bear; but the sport requires greater quickness and watchfulness. The speed of the elk is tremendous; and it is as much by the ear as by the eye that its progress is ascertained; the crashing of the branches, as he plunges through them, giving intimation of his approach. It is extremely difficult on that account to hit him mortally, if at all; for a shot to hit him must be fired at least a yard a head of him, and almost in anticipation of his appearance, as he crosses the narrow openings in the woods; and if the wound be not mortal at once, his great strength will enable him to cover an

immense distance before he falls, or, perhaps, to escape entirely; but if struck on the head or shoulder he rears his giant height in the air, and falls backwards. A full-grown elk will measure seventeen hands high. In the summer of 1839 one was caught alive, by some boatmen, within two miles of St. Petersburg, as it was swimming across the Neva to gain the Finnish side.

The extraordinary speed and powers of endurance of the elk led to its being used for purposes of draught; but, as criminals availed themselves of these advantages to elude justice, either by positive escape, or by evading suspicion by transporting themselves, in an incredible short space of time, to a distant part (like Turpin in his ride to York), the employment of this animal is strictly prohibited both in Russia and Sweden.

Of late years some small herds of the roebuck have been met with; but my informant tells me they have as yet been unmolested.

The lynx is not uncommon; but, from its extreme cunning, it is rarely captured. The only specimen I have seen was caught in a steel trap buried beneath the snow; but I have heard of their having been seen, during the severity of winter, in the gardens of the suburbs of the city. It is the true *Felis Lynx*, and measures about three feet in length; the tail being from six to seven inches, and the tuft of hair at the tips of the ears being very strongly defined.

The white fox (*Vulpes arcticus*) of the arctic regions has been found once only; and Dr. Brandt of the Imperial Museum has told me that he considers that fact as the most extraordinary one in natural history which has ever come within his knowledge; as they have never been known so far south, and their nearest habitat—where they are rare, even—is full one thousand miles from the place where this individual was shot; namely, in 68° or 70° of latitude. The animal in question was shot by a peasant at Pilna, about thirty miles from St. Petersburg, in the depth of winter; and in the subsequent summer another perfectly black animal was seen, which, being the colour of the young, proves that the one killed was not a solitary specimen.

The common fox is very abundant; and its fur, from its great length and thickness, is much prized as a lining for ladies' cloaks;—fifty pounds being the usual price for a set of skins. It is not followed as a beast of chace, excepting in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg, where a subscription pack of hounds is kept up by some of the English merchants; but their success has been very partial, and the only good run which I believe they have on record is one they had with a wolf, which was fairly run into the open country, after a two hours' burst without a check. The shortness of the season, and the abominable marshy

country which they have to traverse, readily accounts for the short register of deaths.

The white hare, and a large variety of the common species, are very abundant. The former, which is, during the summer months, of a whitish grey, does not assume its winter garb till the end of October; and even then some few specimens which came under my notice retained some shade of their summer coat: it is, however, properly speaking, of a pure white, with a little black spot at the extremity of each ear. The other variety I have alluded to stands remarkably high on its legs, which are very fine and slender, and weighs as much as fifteen pounds.

The capercali, the hazel (*Tetrao bonasia*), and the willow grouse (*Tetrao saliceti*) are extremely abundant; but the first is difficult of approach, and is rarely procured except at the first dawn of day. The shooting season begins on the 1st of July, long before the young broods are strong enough to afford legitimate sport.

Ducks and other water fowl afford some sport in the early spring, on their return from the south; but they do not form a prominent feature in the catalogue of sports.

To the naturalist, taking it in its full extent, this country is the richest field in Europe in every branch of natural history; but its very extent is a difficulty not to be overcome. Specimens are not easily procured, excepting in ornithology; and

these may be found in considerable variety in the bird market of St. Petersburg. I often visit the spot for that purpose, and have picked up specimens which are remarkably scarce in England; but, though they are often sufficiently abundant, they are rarely in a fit state to preserve. The great black woodpecker (*Picus martius*) is by no means uncommon; but it is invariably deprived of its bill, from some superstitious feeling of the people; and the long-tailed duck (*Anas glacialis*) is always imperfect in its tail feathers. The pine grossbeak (*Loxia enucleator*) I have bought, both alive and dead, for two-pence, and I occasionally see the snowy owl (*Strix nyctea*), the passerine (*Strix passerina*), the great-eared owl (*Strix bubo*), the hawk owl (*Strix nisoria*), the cross-bill (*Loxia pityopsittacus*), snow bunting (*Emberiza nivalis*), shore lark (*Alauda alpestris*), blue-throated warbler (*Sylvia suecica*), and the *Tetrao medius*, a bird which has been erroneously supposed to be a hybrid between the capercali and the black-cock.

At the commencement of the winter, I have found dead bullfinches and waxen chatterers (I can never get this latter alive) exposed for sale in vast profusion as an article of food much esteemed. The season makes no difference in the exposure of birds in cages for sale; and as a substitute for water, the drinking troughs are kept filled with snow. The Russians are particularly fond of

birds, and having so few natural songsters of their own in the northern districts, they are supplied by the Germans, who bring, in the first ships on the opening of the navigation, myriads of larks and canaries, which fill the air with their melody in the garden of the custom-house, where they are exposed for sale.

It is, I believe, a general opinion in England, that this is the region of furs, and that they are a kind of staple of the country; than which nothing can be more erroneous. They are not only expensive, but the indigenous ones are proscribed by the imperious law of fashion, excepting the rarer and more costly kinds, such as the sable and black fox; which latter is almost beyond price. Ermine is forbidden to all but royalty; squirrel is too common, besides being too heavy: in fact, the red fox and the racoon are almost the only varieties worn by the respectable classes, and they are procured principally through the medium of the Russian and North American fur companies, and are subject to very heavy fiscal charges on importation. In our own country the Germans are the principal furriers, and here they entirely engross the trade, besides taking in charge, during the summer months, the furs of their customers to secure them from moth and damage. The consumption of animal life is so great to meet the demands for this indispensable

article of clothing, that the wonder is how the production can keep pace with it.

It is considered the height of ill-breeding to enter an apartment in either cloak or wrapper, and a servant is always at hand in the hall to take charge of them, and to throw them over you when you leave. At the English church there are several men employed for this purpose, for the same rule is observed even there; and besides, the well-regulated temperature of the place would render warm clothing an inconvenience. Thus, also, in their dwelling-houses, the ladies may, and do wear the lightest dresses; for a summer heat reigns within, and winter clothing would be oppressive.

The chief opportunity of seeing native finery is mixed up with a curious custom observed on Whit Monday at the summer gardens, when the unmarried girls parade themselves, on the chance of being selected and sought in marriage by those who are on the look-out for wives. These young people arrange themselves in rows by the sides of the long avenues, attended by their mothers, decked out in their gayest costume; while congregated thousands promenade up and down in dense crowds. The idea realizes what we call "love at first sight," and is certainly a novel way of putting the power of Cupid to the test. If an arrow tells, the party introduces himself to the mother, exchanges addresses, and the matter is

negotiated at home. This is confined to the little people — I mean those just above the lower class; but in former times it was common to all ranks.

Certain days seem, by a kind of prescriptive right, to be set apart for public assemblages and promenades; thus, on the first of May, the gardens at Ekatinerof, deserted almost otherwise, are crowded with equipages and pedestrians, like the Longchamps in Paris. It is a kind of May-day ceremony, to usher in and welcome the return of spring; in which the imperial family take part, and appear in state. A similar scene is got up in the Yelagen island at a more advanced period of the season; and this, from the more attractive scenery, and the more settled state of the weather, is the preferable lounge, it being, besides, at that period, the court residence.

LETTER XVII.

Journey to Moscow.—Travelling in Russia.— Extortions of Postmasters. — Rugged Roads. — Government Couriers. — Introduction of Railways into Russia premature. — A Measure of Imperial Policy. — Moscow nationally the Capital of the Empire.— Its striking Aspect and Historical Importance. — Burning of Moscow not premeditated. — Disclaimer of the Emperor Alexander.—Rostopchin's Denial of Complicity. — Road to Moscow. — Parallel Road to Novgorod. — Rate and Mode of Travelling. — Melancholy Aspect of the Country. — Stunted Trees and Cattle. — Absence of Scenery.— Scanty Population.—Log Houses. — Sleeping on Stoves, or in the Open Air. — Monotonous Aspect of the Villages.— Gipsies. — Dress of the Female Peasants. — Waist above the Bosom.—Novgorod. — Tver. — Torjok. — Skill of Russian Drivers. — Trains of Telégas.—Flocks of Ravens. — Abundance of Game.— Superstitious Prejudices against eating Hares and Pigeons. — Food of Tartars and Russians.—Edible Toadstools. —Distant View of Moscow.

I HAVE been engaged for the last few days in completing my arrangements for a journey to Moscow, whence probably this letter will be despatched. You might imagine, from this announcement, that my preparations have been unnecessarily great, as suited to a campaign rather than to a mere expedition; but the fact is, that there is more involved in the journey than the question of transition. The various diffi-

culties and objections have, however, been surmounted, by an agreement made between an English and an American gentleman and myself to secure the *malle-poste*, which only carries three passengers. The other descriptions of public vehicles are so abominably bad, that this is besieged by passengers for many days in advance; and as it combines speed with comfort, it is even more eligible than a private conveyance. To travel post, is to offer oneself as a victim to all kinds of imposition and extortion; for though armed with a *padaroshna* (the government order for the supply of post-horses), yet the postmasters invariably interpose obstacles and delays, which are not to be set aside without satisfying their cupidity by a bribe.

Travelling in this country has a marked resemblance to all its other features, and is an additional channel for tyranny and abuse of office. The postmaster is not a whit behind the *employé* in his tergiversations; and, gambler-like, he calculates his chances how far he may hazard his safety and position against open extortion and wilful obstruction. Facility of intercourse being the very corner-stone of civilization, all natural progress to its attainment is arrested *in limine*, both by the usual restrictions in which every proceeding is enveloped, and by the impediments interposed by the authorities on the road; indeed, the roads themselves, excepting the two great *chaussées* to

Moscow and Warsaw, are enough to deter all but the most stout-hearted and robust from encountering their horrors. The Feldjägers, a subordinate kind of courier,, who traverse the country in all directions charged with the transmission of the government orders, sink under the accumulation of hardship and fatigue in seven years. Seated in a little open *teléga*, without either backs or springs—for no springs could stand the shocks of the rugged surface of the roads—they travel thousands of versts at the greatest speed, without repose or rest, exposed to all the vicissitudes of the climate, and bound to the greatest watchfulness.

This state of things is precisely analogous to the character of the people, if divested of the artificial garb of civilization which has been thrown upon them like an ill-made garment; but the comparison may be carried further, with reference to the new era into which the country is about to enter by the adoption of the railway system. Civilization was forced upon the people almost before its rudiments existed; and in like manner, the railway revolution is to be introduced before the wants or habits of the people are sufficiently advanced to require it. As the former was done *per saltum*, creating in a day what other countries had taken years to accomplish—transplanting, as it were, the full-grown tree, instead of watching and training the sapling in its

growth — copying other nations, and introducing new forms which the people's minds were not ready to receive, so the latter is also on the eve of being established, to anticipate circumstances which neither the present numerical state of the population, nor the necessities of the country require, as regards actual transit only. The moral effects to be gained eventually are doubtless immense, and the extended means of communication will ultimately carry social improvement with them; but the actual necessities of the two capitals demand no such approximation as will be afforded by a railroad. Indeed, at present, the restrictions imposed by the jealousy of the government will militate against any real freedom of intercourse; for it is not to be supposed that the vigilance and regulations of the police, as regards travellers, will be relaxed, or that any facility of movement beyond additional speed will be afforded them.

Experience has established the fact, that the transit of goods by railway makes no compensating return, and that passengers alone are to be looked to as the source of profit; therefore, although the produce which reaches St. Petersburg, *viâ* Moscow, is very considerable, that interest has not influenced the contemplated works; nor, in strict truth, has the idea of the wants of the population been much more considered: the projected line is, in short, a state

engine to serve the Emperor's purposes. It will pass through a district without either population or commerce to assist or to be assisted, following an uninterrupted level of nearly 500 miles (for the Valdai hills are of no account), full of innumerable difficulties from the swampy nature of the soil, possessing only three inconsiderable towns along its whole extent, namely Novgorod, Tver, and Torjok, and the surface of the country being otherwise but thinly inhabited. Distant districts, where the climate and the soil do not subdue the energies, nor render futile the industry of the people, may be called into more active life; but the government must first abandon its leading-strings, and permit that unrestricted freedom of which the demolition of space and distance is the type.

Moscow is as holy and as sacred a city to the Russians, as Rome is to the Papists, or Mecca to the Mussulmen: they regard it not only with enthusiasm, as the cradle of their empire, but with religious veneration as the metropolis of their church. It is, in fact, so far as concerns all national ceremonies, the capital: it is in the Kremlin that the Emperor assumes his crown; and popular custom requires that the Empress shall be confined of her first child within its walls. Peter could remove the seat of government; but beyond that he could not venture to trespass on the prejudices of his subjects.

The untravelled stranger connects an idea of

Asiatic splendour with his conception of it, and wonders at the glories of the Kremlin. The famous legions of Napoleon, whose conquests had made them familiar with the most celebrated cities in Europe, could not restrain their admiration as the view first burst upon them. In truth, Moscow is a noble city; and, but for the insignificance of the Moskwa, which flows through it, it would not shrink from a comparison with Constantinople. And apart from all local considerations, history has affixed an imperishable name to it, for the memorable act of self-devotion which consigned it to the flames, and thus struck the first fatal blow at the colossal power which held Europe prostrate at its feet. Popular opinion insists that the act was premeditated and organised, and Europe pays the tribute of admiration and praise to the heroism and sagacity which prompted it; but, although it should constitute a nation's pride, the Emperor Alexander always averred most strongly that he never either ordered or contemplated the conflagration of the city, and Rostopchin denied most positively that it was wilfully committed. Indeed, after a voluntary exile of some years in France, he thought it necessary to preface his return to his native country by the publication of a pamphlet, intended to stifle any patriotic renown which might be attached to him, by proving that the fire had burst forth spontaneously, and had not originated in any precon-

ceived plan. It is singular that he should have felt it incumbent on him to disclaim in Russia an act of heroism, for which all Europe, astonished at its grandeur, gave him credit; and that he should decry as a calumny the glory attached to him as the saviour of his country. The denial is not creditable to him; for it proves, notwithstanding the nobleness of the act, that he has not the soul of a hero. The man who fears the light of his own greatness, is in fact but the ordinary being he represents himself to be; but in this instance, perhaps, a man would not refuse to pass down ennobled in history, did he not feel bound to sacrifice fame to expediency: a subjugated people is always afraid of its own heroism, and in this country, where men are naturally and of necessity reserved and prudent, each one struggles to maintain an unenviable position of insignificance and obscurity.

Moscow.

A journey of sixty-two hours, unbroken by any incident, has brought us here. The road is unexceptionably good, and in as fine order as if McAdam himself superintended it; the care of it is entrusted to retired soldiers, who reside in station-houses erected at distances of five miles from each other, and is kept with military precision. It is throughout of considerable width, and on either side an additional extent is marked off by tall poles,

to indicate the line which may be traversed by the sledges in winter with safety. Remnants of the old corduroy road are still visible in some places: a curiosity, as showing the early principle of road making. From St. Petersburg as far as Novgorod, another road, equally as large, runs parallel with the main one; and is intended for the use of waggons and droves of cattle on the days when the Emperor is passing, to save him from the clouds of dust, and the delays and interruptions arising from the lines of telégas and other country equipages arriving from the interior. This arrangement is highly singular, and can only be explained by the fact that the number of vehicles on the road is greater when near the capital, and that large droves of beasts and long lines of carts driven by one man are not easily managed, and might cause serious accidents when the speed at which the Emperor travels is taken into consideration. With ordinary travellers, indeed, there is little to complain of as to pace, for the Russians keep their horses up to the highest pitch of their powers. These animals are small, but strong, active, and full of vigour; harnessed four abreast, and without blinkers, they are driven by a man clad in a rough gray caftan — or, if the weather be warm, in a coloured shirt, worn tunic fashion, — who, with extended arms, and his hands filled with the multiplicity of reins, urges his cattle forward with his voice and a variety of gesticula-

tions; for the whip is a mere appendage, and inoperative from its size.

The country presents throughout the same melancholy aspect of interminable swamp, studded with plantations of abortive birch-trees and thinly scattered firs. The eye seeks in vain for refreshing varieties of cultivation, or well grown timber trees with thick foliage, and encounters nothing save an impoverished soil and patches of stunted forest. The very cattle are ill grown and of a wretched kind; as if the climate oppressed the beasts in the ratio that despotism tyrannizes over the human beings: indeed, it appears as if both nature and government in Russia were in league to render existence a hardship. When one reflects on the physical source from which it was necessary to start to organise such a state of society, there is no further room for astonishment; unless it be to find material civilisation so advanced among a people so little favoured by nature.

The horizon seldom bounds the view of the plain, as the obstacle of a bush or fence on the dreary level conceals miles of its extent, without a rise or undulation to mark the distance beyond; in fact, there is no scenery to fix the memory, no bits of landscape to gladden the eye. The Valdai hills, among which the Volga takes its source, are of inconsiderable elevation, and present no new feature in the scene.

The signs of population are scanty, and the

appearance of villages, either in the distance or on the main road, unfrequent. The houses are entirely of wood (log-houses, as the Americans call them), formed of the rough stems of trees with the interstices stuffed with moss and lime; but, uncouth as they are, they are not unsightly, nor without some pretension to a kind of rustic elegance: the gable is invariably made to face the street, and is edged with a kind of lace-work of carved wood, often painted in gay colours. And this is a type of the national character, where external display and superficial effect mask sordid want and squalid misery; while the absence of many of the necessary comforts of life proclaim the semi-barbarian. The rooms are dark, close, and unwholesome, scantily furnished, and wanting the luxury of a bed. In the winter the inhabitants sleep huddled up on the top of the stove; and in the summer they either throw themselves on the benches fixed round the room, or more frequently resort to an open balcony affixed to the house, or lay themselves at full length on the ground, by the side of the street. I have seen long lines of these sleeping figures wrapped up in their sheep skins in many of the villages we passed, sunk in so deep a slumber that I have stepped over them and entered the houses without disturbing them. The general aspect of these villages is monotonous: they consist invariably of two rows of houses removed to some little distance from the road,

already too wide; and as the distance from St. Petersburg increases, they look more impoverished and neglected. Every house is isolated, and surrounded with a tall wooden fence, within which a variety of domestic offices are grouped; this gives them an air of comfort and ease, which, in truth, they are far from actually possessing. But however poor the people, there is no house where the *samavar* is not to be found, nor where the peasant will not furnish you with tea for a trifling consideration.

In several places along the road gipsies have regularly located themselves; but, though driven by the climate to abandon one part of their habits, they reside in houses, and, constrained by the laws of the country, they remain stationary, their general character is unchanged; for, averse to industrious pursuits, they gain a living by horse-dealing and jobbing. It is singular that these people should have travelled so far north, and into a country so uncongenial with their habits; for there is no doubt as to their race; and besides,

> "they show a tawny skin;
> The vellum of the pedigree they claim."

The peasant women are less abroad than the men, and have less coquetry or love of dress than others of their sex; in fact they exhibit anything but good taste, and apparently consider the toilet to form no part of their attractions. They wear

a loose robe fastened at the neck and falling to the ground, not fitting to the shape, but merely buttoned down the front; over this they put a large apron of the same length, fastened over the shoulders by two short braces crossing each other. They mostly go barefooted; for it is only the more affluent who are shod, and they wear coarse, heavy, and clumsy boots reaching to the knee. Their headdress is either a handkerchief or a piece of stuff twisted on; excepting on fête days, when they adopt the national coiffure before described. Many of them adopt a most hideous fashion, so inconceivably outrageous and unnatural, that the wonder is how it can be supported. They contrive to make the waist *above* instead of below the bosom; so that the sash, if they wore one, would come close up under the arms. Of course all grace and beauty of form is thus destroyed, and not only is an appearance of deformity produced, but the deformity itself actually exists.

Of the three great towns which the road to Moscow traverses, Novgorod was once a republic, and subsequently became the cradle of the Russian Empire; its antiquity is undoubted, and the extensive walls of its Kremlin, though in a dilapidated state, still give proofs of its former grandeur and importance. It was conquered and subjugated by Ivan Vassilievitch, in 1470, and its history is little else than one of slaughter and continual conflict. Its commercial prosperity was very considerable

till the foundation of St. Petersburg absorbed its energies, and reduced it to its present decayed and unimportant condition.

Tver is a neat quiet little town, deriving some little importance from the Volga flowing through it. Torjok owes its celebrity to its excellent manufactories of ornamented leather, and its far-famed cutlets. The town itself looks cheerful, and there is a general appearance of improvement around it in cultivation and rural economy: but still there is no beauty in the scenery, although the eye rejoices in the change from positive sterility to comparative productiveness; for the vast and dreary waste behind it had not even the grandeur of the desert to dignify the scene.

Travellers on the road are few, and there is little to draw the attention beyond occasional chances of an accident, and the slight alarm thus occasioned. The skill of the driver, however, is equal to every crisis, and he seems to glory in the opportunities afforded him of showing his dexterity: he handles his four beasts as if they were compressed into one; sometimes bringing them into the closest possible contact with each other, and then, as suddenly, spreading them over the road to the fullest stretch of their traces, amusing himself with Ducrow-like feats while he still urges the animals to the top of their speed. It necessarily follows that on a road intersected by so many streams, the bridges must be very nu-

merous; and when it happens that they are out of repair, temporary ones are erected near them; in these cases the driver, without relaxing his speed, turns his quadriga as on a pivot out of the road, and passes the insecure and rattling planks with a kind of fiendish delight. Even on the main road itself, he seldom keeps a straight course, but crosses from side to side with the same unflagging speed, threading through the crowds of telégas scattered over the road without order; for as ten or a dozen of these little carts, each drawn by one horse, are under the direction of one man, it is impossible for him to keep them in a line, and these caravans often consist of a hundred vehicles. The road is thus necessarily encumbered with them; and, but for the address of the driver in winding through the labyrinth, it would be necessary either to stop or to move with as much care as in passing a flock of sheep. These telégas or little carts are of the rudest possible construction, and not capable of bearing any considerable weight; the little animals which draw them are vigorous for their size, and continue their toilsome journey with unabated energy, dropping from exhaustion rather than flagging; and although, perhaps, the load may be but one cask of tallow or a few hides, yet it has been dragged hundreds of versts, even from the Ukraine itself.

At one spot on the road, I saw a peasant emerge

from a wood with a capercailie he had just shot; and as hitherto, I had never had a fresh specimen in my hand, I was anxious to see it; but to stop the mail for that purpose would have been unreasonable: however, within a few yards, one of our horses fell, and as we were going at full speed it was dragged a considerable distance before the carriage could be stopped; to raise the horse and re-adjust its harness (for it was not hurt) was the work of some minutes, which I took advantage of to hail the peasant. The bird was an old one, and therefore would be despised for the table by the Russian gastronomes; but it was in splendid feather, and I could have secured it for fifteen copecks, about sevenpence English money.

Hawks are numerous over the country, and occasionally an eagle showed itself; but the number of ravens along the road was perfectly astonishing: they were in little flocks like rooks, which is utterly at variance with the solitary habits we ascribe to the bird. Game is abundant, and in the wastes of the interior the operations of the game laws (for they have such enactments in Russia also) do not extend; a happy privilege for the peasant, who avails himself largely of the bountiful supply.

There is some superstitious prejudice against hares, which are seldom eaten; but it is not on account of the same scruples which deter them from eating pigeons; these being entirely of a

religious character. Custom, even if the origin of it be unknown, is most binding; but the peasants take no heed of those who set its rules at defiance. The Tartar race, who dwell in some numbers in the large towns, carrying on a trade as hawkers of dressing gowns and stuffs in imitation of the Persian manufactures, indulge in their nationalities, even to feeding on horse-flesh, without remark or scandal. The Russians themselves are certainly not over scrupulous in some things, and eat with gusto many articles which we not only reject, but consider actually deleterious: toadstools, for instance, are considered a dainty; and I have counted no less than fifteen varieties of those fungi exposed for sale in the markets. Whether their mode of dressing them—for they use an abundance of salt in the preparation—or whether the climate divests them of their noxious qualities, I am unable to say.

The approach to Moscow from the north carries with it no idea of the neighbourhood of the capital of an empire, nor even of a large city; that is, there are no suburbs nor groups of houses in the vicinity, nor is there any bustle to indicate the presence of a dense population. As seen at the distance of a few miles, it presents a confused collection of cupolas, spires, and minarets glittering with gold, and all the fanciful decorations of colour; and for the first time, the eye ceases to encounter the harsh, stiff outline of objects rearing

themselves abruptly into the sky; for, at length, there is a back-ground to the picture, formed by the wooded slopes of the Sparrow hills, and presenting the first true bit of landscape scenery in an extent of 500 miles. The mind flags, and gets wearied with the endless succession of plain and unbroken horizon: it is like the monotony of ship-board; and one seeks relief in the imposing grandeur and majesty of mountain scenery, which the rich and varied landscape alone can effect.

LETTER XVIII.

Moscow. — The Kremlin. — Reflections. — Difference of Manners between Moscow and St. Petersburg. — Miraculous Picture. — Holy Gate of the Kremlin. — View of Moscow from the Terrace. — Bizarre Architecture of the Churches. — Cathedral of St. Basil. — The Kremlin the Heart of Moscow. — Tower of Ivan Veliki. — Ancient Palace of the Tsars. — Ancient Military Accoutrements. — Costumes and Equipages of the Tsars. — Thrones, Crowns, and Sceptres of conquered Monarchs. — Church of the Assumption. — Canonized Pictures. — Image Worship. — Ludicrous Paintings of Scripture Subjects. — Political Use of Superstition by Peter the Great. — Childlike Treatment of Patron Saints.

Moscow.

I HAVE at length accomplished one of my dearest wishes, and am fairly established for some days in this extraordinary city. Adopting my usual habit of seeing for myself, and forming my own impressions without enduring the parrot-like descriptions and tedious common-places of a valet-de-place, I have piloted myself and followed a perfectly independent course. Instinct led me at first and at once to the Kremlin, and I stood beneath its Moorish battlements, impatient to enter within its walls, but unable to break the charm which fascinated me to the spot. From these

walls, the wave of conquest had rolled back, carrying on its surge the modern Xerxes, till it broke on the rocks of St. Helena. The towers of the Kremlin alone stood imperishable in a sea of fire; and its strong foundations had resisted even the determined efforts of the French engineers to destroy them by blasting. All was now calm and serene; but beneath the spot I stood on, hundreds of miserable wretches lay heaped, whose frozen limbs, fixed in the distorted attitudes in which death overtook them, had been hewn off with axes to accommodate them to the pits into which they were promiscuously thrown.

There is a perceptible difference between the manners and customs of this place and those at St. Petersburg; they are more national, as being less influenced by the concourse of strangers, and the admixture of foreign habits. Superstition is carried farther, and the public exhibition of it on an enlarged scale was one of the first things I encountered as I approached the gates of the Kremlin.

I had noticed a group of people collected round a little miniature chapel placed at the entrance and dividing the gateway into two arches, when a carriage with four horses, the coachman and two footmen bare-headed, drove up; two priests alighted, bearing a large picture between them with the greatest veneration and ceremony; the people uncovered their heads at the sight of it,

forming themselves into a line, and on the priests elevating the picture, they passed beneath it with bows and crossings, and, waiting till it was deposited within the chapel, they filed in in the like good order, prosternating themselves before it and kissing it. This picture, a sorry work of art, but invaluable from the costly jewels with which it is studded, was one of the Virgin Mary, and is kept in this chapel, and is supposed to be possessed of miraculous power, particularly in cases of sickness. The income of this picture is very great from the gifts of its devotees, and it maintains the carriage I saw for its own particular use; for it is carried in state to the bedside of the sufferers to exert its healing virtues, and when thus removed, the people patiently wait its return to pay their accustomed devotion before they will pass the sanctuary. The battlemented walls I had been surveying surround the outer court of the Kremlin, which is protected by a second circumvallation of great thickness, through which a long arched passage leads to the cynosure itself; but here there is a form to be observed, from which strangers, whatever may be their creed, are not even exempt. This entrance is called the Holy Gate (*Spasskie Varota*), the origin of which epithet is lost, but tradition says that a miraculous figure of our Saviour surmounted it; however, no one is allowed to pass through the arch without taking off his

hat, which the sentry very unceremoniously removes should the wearer omit that ceremony.

The Kremlin stands on an eminence, which is not perceptible till you are within its walls, and when you emerge from the sombre passage of the Holy Gate, and reach the terrace, the most beautiful view suddenly breaks upon the eye; a view, which of itself is sufficient to repay the fatigue and tediousness of the journey hither. I have seen it under every effect, and at all hours, for my steps almost intuitively led me there, and, whether glittering under a sultry sun, subdued by the shades of evening, or in the repose of moonlight (if such it can be called when we are yet in the longest days, and the moon has no functions to perform), it commands the most unqualified admiration. My forte does not lie in description, but still I must attempt something, if it be a mere outline, to give you an idea of the picture.

As seen from this terrace, the eye becomes first aware of the inequalities of the ground on which Moscow is built. It is said of it, as of ancient Rome, that it is built on seven hills; but however that fact may be, there is no doubt but the gentle undulations of the land form the principal charms of the scene. The terrace, broken in its length at intervals by picturesque Moorish towers, slopes down to the river Moskwa; in the middle distance portions of the city develop themselves, not crowded together and heaped in dark

masses, but broken by gardens and planted spaces; among which the whitened houses, softened thus in their outline, harmonize most agreeably. The back-ground is filled up by meadows, which lose themselves in the wooded sides of the Sparrow hills that bound the horizon. Still, perhaps, the most remarkable objects in this vast amphitheatre, spread out map-like before you, are the immense number of domes and steeples, belonging to the churches and convents. In 1730, Weber estimated the number of churches at 1500, and in 1778 Coxe fixed them at 484; which probably, notwithstanding the conflagration of 1812, is near the mark.

The orthodox form of the Greek church is that of a Maltese cross, surmounted by several towers or domes of various heights, but never less than five, the centre one being the most considerable. These vary in their forms, which are sometimes most bizarre, representing a mitre, a tiara, a minaret, a turban, a globe or a dome terminating in a point; each supporting a large gilt cross, from which festoons of bright chains depend, graceful as an ornament, and necessary as a security. The singularity of the architecture is enhanced further by the styles of decoration, over which the most sportive fancy seems to have presided. It is a kind of masquerade, and the eye is literally dazzled by the brilliancy of the effect produced by the varied forms and rich

coverings of the roofs; gold and silver, and colours of the brightest hues glitter in the sun from surfaces smooth like a cuirass, coned like a pine-apple, scaled like a serpent, tinted as a rainbow, rayed as a zebra, or ribbed like a melon. Here and there the tall thin tower of a minaret connected with the worship of Mahomet or the religion of the Tartars presents itself, and seems to realize the idea that one is transported to a scene of Eastern romance.

There is one building in the midst of these strange creations which excels them all, and is so entirely without a parallel, that it deserves a peculiar account. It is the cathedral of St. Basil — Vasilii Blagennoi, built by Ivan Vassilievitch to commemorate the capture of Kasan. Ivan was a tyrant in cruelty, who, to prevent the architect from rearing a similar edifice elsewhere, caused his eyes to be put out. It consists internally of a number of separate chapels, I believe twenty, grouped together, and having no communication with each other. Its external elevation may be said to be without symmetry, for among the whole of its sixteen cupolas, small and great, there are no two which resemble each other, either in form or ornament. A diversity of colour, which, however, does not shock the eye, assists rather the effect produced by the fantastical style of the building; from the centre of which a tall steeple rises, terminating in a cross, having the crescent

beneath it, to indicate the triumphs of Christianity over the religion of Mahomet. I borrow the words of a recent writer, which I think will convey to you, better than I have done, the real character of the effect.

"Figurez vous une agglomeration de petites tourelles inégales; figurez vous plutôt une espèce de fruit irregulier, tout hérissé d'excroissances, un melon cantaloup à côtes brodées, ou mieux encore une cristallisation de mille couleurs, dont le poli metallique a des reflets qui brillent de loin aux rayons du soleil comme le verre de Bohème ou de Venise, comme la faïence de Delft la plus variolée, comme l'émail de la chine le mieux verni; ce sont des écailles de poissons dorées, des peaux de serpents étendues sur des tas de pierres informes, des têtes de dragons, des armures de lézards à teintes changeantes, des ornaments d'autel, des habits de prêtres; et le tout est surmonté de flèches dont la peinture ressemble à des étoffes de soie mordorée: dans les étroites intervalles de ces campanilles, ornés comme on parerait des personnes, vous voyez reluire des toits peints en couleur gorge de pigeon, en rose, en azur, et toujours bien vernis; le scintillement de ces tapesseries éblouit l'œil et fascine l'imagination. Certes, le pays où un pareil monument s'appelle un lieu de prière, n'est pas l'Europe, c'est l'Inde, la Perse, la Chine, et les hommes qui vont adorer Dieu

dans cette boîte des confitures ne sont pas des Chrétiens."

The Kremlin is not a palace nor a citadel, but the heart of the city, in which the most sacred national objects are grouped and preserved. The palace, the treasury, the arsenal, many churches, the patriarchal residence, the senate house, and the ancient palace of the Tsars stand close together; and the celebrated great bell and the tall tower of Ivan Veliki are among its curiosities. The former has recently been raised by M. Falconnet from the deep pit in which it has lain for so many years, and now stands conspicuous on a large pedestal; the latter is simply what I have called it, a tall tower. Its original purpose is unknown, but on each stage of it whole families of bells are hung, from the ponderous giant downwards to a mere Lilliputian tinkler: the panoramic view from the summit is perfect; and before the French invasion a cross of solid gold crowned it, but as it formed part of their spoils, it has been replaced by a more humble representative.

The ancient palace of the Tsars, or, as it is commonly called, the Tartar palace, is a most beautiful toy, and a choice relic of antiquity; which, by the good taste of the Emperor, has been perfectly restored, without injury or addition to its original character. It is decidedly of Moorish architecture, and stands out light and joyous from among the heavy modern structures which surround it.

It is in the pagoda form of China, a succession of terraces rising on each other, attenuating as they rise, till they terminate in a single marquée-like chamber. The slight overhanging roofs gaily painted, and the slender pillars which support each successive range of them, are peculiarly elegant. The interior is painted in rich arabesque work, and all the adjuncts are in particularly good keeping, and contrast agreeably with the somewhat severe style of the present day.

Cannon of all descriptions, trophies of war as well as those designed for service, are piled in long rows around the arsenal, within which stores of modern weapons bristle among the relics of the earlier parts of the eighteenth century, kept as characteristics of the times. I have seen in no other country mementoes of such recent date, and yet they are as full of interest as the mailed suits of the steel-clad warriors of antiquity. Russia is peculiarly rich in these simple annals, and seems to preserve in the national repositories specimens of the dress and accoutrements of its military, as changes have succeeded each other. The little conical infantry cap of red cloth, the large awkward gorget of the officers, and the enormous mass of the cavalry boot, are curious records of old military costume. But the wardrobes of the sovereigns are not the least singular items in this collection. Their state robes and a set of their ordinary apparel, from the days of Peter to those of Alex-

ander, are laid out in state, offering a strange contrast between barbaric magnificence and elegant simplicity. The state equipages have also an asylum, and mark accurately the history in the progress of coach building. The early ones are as rough and uncouth as it is possible to imagine, the windows being fixtures and composed of horn.

Among the more costly objects of real historical interest, are the crowns of the conquered governments annexed to Russia, the litter on which Charles XII. was borne at the battle of Pultowa, and the book of the constitution of Poland. The crowns are placed on velvet cushions resting on pedestals, behind each of which are ranged as many thrones elevated on platforms — a convocation of the attributes of royalty to prove the instability of human affairs. These thrones are highly curious, and valuable from the quantity of precious metals used in their construction, and the profusion of jewels with which some of them are studded. The most remarkable perhaps is that of Ivan III. carved in ivory, and a silver one of the brothers Ivan and Peter Alexeievitch, with a little recess behind used by the princess Sophia to prompt them; an office she exercised during the life of the former, and till Peter, assuming the sole reins of government, rid himself of her obnoxious and usurped authority. The most ancient crown is that of Monomaque,

bearing date 1116. Then follow those of Kazan, Astrachan, Georgia, one made to represent the conquest of Siberia, and the bloody diadem of Poland; the more modern ones are those of Peter, Catherine I., and Elizabeth. What an imposing galaxy of splendour! The wealth collected there in diamonds and the choicest jewels is worth an empire. Globes, sceptres, and batons swell the list of the constellations; they blaze as satellites around the imperial diadem, tell the tale of nations, and are the only monuments left of their existence, saving the few lines which they may occupy in the dark and remote pages of history. They represent, in fact, the chronology of the empire. The enchanted scenes of the Arabian Nights and the gorgeous palace of Aladdin seem to be realized in this unique and resplendent collection. The antiquarian and the virtuoso might pass their lives in going through its treasures in detail. The golden bay-leafed coronet of ancient Rome fresh and uninjured, vases and goblets of the precious metals, carved and inlaid with the choicest jewels, crystal cups of every age and country, armour and horse furniture studded with diamonds and turquoise, bewilder the senses; while hundreds of banners floating round the walls, distinguished by the national emblems of Persia, Turkey, Poland, France, and Sweden, complete this heterogeneous assemblage of the national wealth and glory.

Of the several churches grouped together in the area of the Kremlin, that of the Assumption is the most remarkable, and is besides the edifice in which the coronation of the Emperor takes place. It is remarkably simple, but richly decorated, and painted with the figures of saints and actions illustrative of them to the very roof; from the centre of which a colossal face of our Saviour looks down on the worshippers below. The iconast, which is the screen dividing the sanctuary from the nave of the church, is a magnificent piece of gilded iron work, extending to the roof itself, where it terminates in a glory bearing the dove. Its greatest treasure is a painting of the Virgin Mary ascribed to St. Luke; but, setting its originality (?) aside, the precious stones with which it is studded, even to the frame-work, are sufficient to excite that admiration which the more pious would believe to be due to the picture.

The number of these miraculous pictures in Russia is quite inconceivable, and the readiest faith is bestowed on them; although the priests, like their heathen brethren of old, themselves prepare the fraud, to which it is impossible they can be dupes. Thus, for instance, the archimandrite of the Soukaref monastery declared that he had discovered the picture of a saint of surpassing power, and succeeded in getting it canonised. The fame of it was industriously spread, and

thousands of pilgrims visited it and contributed their offerings. With the immense sum thus raised the Archimandrite erected a lofty tower at the entrace of his monastery, and shortly after, requiring some further additions, he alleged that he had found another picture possessing wonderful virtue, and applied to the synod to have it also canonized; but they replied that they could not grant a double privilege to any applicant without injustice to others. It is a duty as well as an implanted feeling to assign nothing but what is perfect in our ideas and worship of the Almighty, and yet the Roman Catholics pay the deepest devotion to the most tawdry and tinselled figures of the Virgin, and the Greek Church prostrates itself before pictures which are a libel on humanity, and much more on a saint. I can imagine fanaticism bowing before the sublime conception of a Thorwaldsen, or worshipping the representations of a Murillo or a Raphael, but I cannot conceive the genuineness of even mistaken devotion, when its objects are either a caricature or a burlesque; it is but a step removed from the hideous idols of the South Seas, and immeasurably behind the mythological worship of ancient Rome and Greece, whose gods represented the beau-ideal of form and grace.

It is not unusual to ornament the walls in the Greek churches with pictured illustrations of passages of Scripture: these paintings exhibit

some of the most extraordinary ideas which ever entered the imagination of man, and throw a doubt even upon the poetry of the art, unless extravagance be such. An ordinary artist would probably be at some loss how to depict the moral lesson of Scripture,—"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" But not so the Russian; his ingenuity masters the difficulty at once, and accordingly he paints a man with a vast beam of timber literally protruding from the eye! This monstrous production is actually hung up in one of the churches at St. Petersburg! Such tabular commentaries on the Scriptures, added to the use of the Sclavonic dialect in the service of the Church, sufficiently account for the entire absence of the knowledge of the doctrines of religion in the minds of the people: their's is not a faith which makes all things possible, but a superstition which believes them probable.

It is inconceivable how the master-spirits of an age, whose minds are unshackelled, and superior to vulgar fanaticism, should not only tolerate, but in fact encourage its operation. Peter resisted its influence when it suited his own purposes, but he did nothing to dispel the popular delusion, although his acts were sufficient to awaken distrust of saintly efficacy in less believing minds than those he governed. The faith in St. Alexander

Nefski was in his time, as it still is, unbounded, and he thought it necessary to remove the bones of the saint from their resting-place in the convent of Gorodichetche, on the banks of the Volga, to his infant capital, not only to fix a sanctity to the spot, but also to attract thither the pilgrims to his shrine. The monks, however, were not disposed to part so readily with their treasure, and twice conveyed it back to its original home, alleging that the saint had in a miraculous manner transferred himself thither: but Peter's superstition was not equal to this attempt on his credulity, for he declared that should the saint refuse to remain in the church which he had built and consecrated to him, he would visit his offence condignly on the monks; and thus the saintly warfare ceased. The shrine of St. Alexander Nefski is perhaps the most costly monument ever erected, it being entirely of silver, the weight of which is computed at three thousand pounds.

I have known instances of people vowing to the little pictured saint hanging in their chambers an additional lamp or decoration if such and such things occurred, as one would offer a bribe to a child; but the result having proved untoward, they have punished their refractory guardian by turning its face to the wall, like putting the child in a corner. Can absurdity be carried further?

LETTER XIX.

Fascination of the Kremlin. — Windsor Castle and the Kremlin compared. — The Mart of Moscow. — Bargaining. — The Tchot, or Calculating Machine — Recreation of Shopkeepers in Moscow. — Tea drinking in Russia—Diet of the Common People. — Oriental Aspect of Moscow. — Gipsy Singers. — Foundling Asylum. — Immense Riding Schools. — Russian Roofs. — Newness of the City. — Burning of Moscow described. — Attempt to blow up the Kremlin by the French. — Horrors of the Retreat from Moscow. — Treatment of French Prisoners. — Banishment to Siberia. — Russian Exile and English Transportation compared. — Prison of sentenced Exiles. — Prison Visitors. — Departure of Prisoners for Siberia. — Effects of the Knout — Dr. Haas, the Russian Howard. — Persecutions of the Jews. — Affecting Scene of a Jewish Family in Prison. — Arbitrary Power of the Officials. — Departure from Moscow.

I BEGIN to fear that I shall leave Moscow without having seen more than the Kremlin, so difficult do I find it to tear myself from the spot. I spend hours on its terrace, or in the gardened slopes beneath, or I mount the tower of Ivan Veliki, or I get to the corner of the stone bridge, which commands the finest view of the enceinte. I imagine myself looking at one of the fabled creations of the East, palaces built by genii, or the gorgeous

effects of theatrical scenic representations. I came expecting much, and, unlike the general issue of such anticipations, have found more. The admiration I have for Windsor Castle, which I conceive to be the acme of all that is noble and princely, is of a different kind, though equally fervent; it is the admiration of the mind, whereas that of the Kremlin is of the senses: they are the representations respectively of romance and history—the one bright and joyous like the mask of Como, the other proud and kingly, reigning over the matchless scenery of English landscape.

Within the precincts of the outer wall is the great mart for business—the *Kitai gorod*, literally the Chinese town, answering to the *Gostinoi Dvor* at St. Petersburg, but more extensive. It contains a labyrinth of passages, each passage being devoted to its particular trade; but the annoyance arising from this system is extreme, for the moment you enter there is a perfect scramble to secure your favour, an appearance of competition which is not borne out by the prices asked. But what you would shrink from elsewhere is expected, and even necessary here: the avowed system is for the purchaser to tender half the price asked, and to rise progressively by fractions till the bargain is struck, which is generally at a quarter or third less than the sum demanded. The Russian tries always for high profits, but rather than not deal he will be satisfied with a trifle.

Their calculations are all formed on a little machine with ten rows of beads of different colours, called a *tchot*, and they will not trust themselves even to pay a difference in change without having verified it by this process. It is a singular and primitive mode of cyphering, and a substitute for mental calculation and the ordinary rules and tables of arithmetic. We should be disposed to form but an indifferent opinion of the prosperity of a tradesman, or of his attention to business, if we found him only idling away his time; but the Russian shopman is ever outside his door engaged in playing draughts with his neighbour: the game seems to be as indispensable to their habits as the morro to the Italians.

Tea in Russia is more fragrant, and certainly superior to that which we meet with in England; and it may be called the national beverage, as, after qvass, a horrible decoction from rye, it is in general use. At St. Petersburg it is sold in the streets to the people by itinerant dealers with an urn slung under their arms, and there are tea-shops of indifferent quality in abundance also; but here they are first-rate establishments on a large scale. Parties resort there to talk over their business as they do with an ice at Tortoni's at Paris. The Russian, however, is no tea-totaller on principle; he is a true connoisseur, and loves his cup, which he takes as a luxury, not mixed with milk, but with a thin slice of lemon floating on the surface.

The attendants wear a kind of Asiatic costume, not unlike that of the Lascars, namely, a sort of white shirt, with trousers of the same material, bound round the waist with a red sash, and the hair long excepting at the nape of the neck, and confined by a little leather fillet.

The common people must possess in a remarkable degree the "dura ilia messorum"—for no ordinary stomach can be equal to the task assigned to it—in triturating raw carrots, broad beans, and unshelled peas, which they munch with real gusto, and in goodly quantities, from supplies hawked about for the purpose: but these are trifles without the addenda of toadstools stewed in train oil and cabbage soup a few degrees worse than sauer krout. Notwithstanding the general poverty of their aliment, they are a fine race of men, and hardy, but without the brawny sinew and muscular development of our own peasantry.

One of the chief recommendations in the appearance of Moscow is the absence of the disciplined uniformity in the structure of the houses. The streets are straight as an arrow, running at right angles, but broken by gardens, and varying in the plan and elevation of the buildings; some of which are still of wood, and contrast oddly enough with the palaces or stately edifices adjoining them. The fewness of the shops gives an air of dullness to the scene, as regards the bustle of commerce and the attraction of the

display of goods; but the cloud of droshkys is as great as at St. Petersburg, the number of military as abundant, and there is also a greater variety in costume. It is almost difficult to reconcile the idea that one is in a European city; and the numbers of buzzards soaring above or dashing into the court-yards, where they perform the duties of scavengers, increase the delusion.

I mentioned to you that we fell in with gypsies on our route, and here there is another colony of them established as public singers,—not ballad or street singing, things altogether unknown, but as performers in the public gardens and other places of recreation. They have attained a high perfection in their art, and their glees and choruses, unaided by instrumental music, are both pleasing and harmonious. Some of the females are of great beauty, which they perfectly understand how to advance the value of by a becoming but coquettish dress and the display of rich ornaments about their persons. It is singular that this race, scattered as it is over the world, should everywhere preserve the same habits, and have the same disinclination to follow steady and industrious pursuits — living, like their probable progenitors the Arabs, the wild life which their contact with civilization has never been able to subdue. Like the wild animal tamed and subjected to man, which ever maintains something of its former character, so the gypsy, conforming to

the laws of the country he inhabits, retains always the impression of the unreclaimed wandering tribes of the desert—with this single exception, that in this country the climate, the paucity of population over its surface, and the scantiness of cultivation in the northern parts, compel him to change his tent and open bivouac for the shelter of a house and the residence of a town. They are, as compared to the native Russians, what this city is to the rest of the empire—features of the East in a northern landscape.

A foundling establishment appears to be of primary consideration, although, in point of fact, its designation is the very reverse of the system it pursues; but the unnatural conduct of parents in both instances may be the promoting cause for the foundation of such institutions: yet in the strict adherence to the intention of these charities the hand of compassion and humanity is stretched out only to relieve and save the wretched beings whom either abject misery or hardened nature leave to chance or death. In Russia, however, a premium is offered to the heartless by opening the doors of an asylum, disguised under a philanthropic name, for the reception of all children whose parents desert them at their birth, and leave them to the vicarious charge of the state, which assumes ever after the entire control and disposal of them; in a word, the ranks of the army and navy are swelled at the expense of

the ties of religion and nature. The foundling asylum here is on a larger scale even than that at St. Petersburg; but its capacious galleries and courts are at this moment empty, as all the inmates are distributed round the neighbourhood to make room for a host of painters and white-washers. The feelings experience a chill while contemplating these receptacles for helpless infancy, where thousands begin a hopeless career, unblessed by parental love; the joyous sprightliness of childhood is nipped by the cold lessons of discipline, and the natural impulses of friendship and affection blighted in the germ, till the heart, hardened and callous, is steeled and indifferent to the miseries of the future: a fitting school to prepare them for a life of oppression and unrelenting tyranny in their superiors.

The arm of power is not allowed to rest or become inactive from want of practice or from laxity of discipline, which might arise from the length and severity of the winter by preventing drill and other military exercises, and therefore immense riding-schools are constructed capable of permitting the manœuvres of very considerable bodies of troops: the principal one of these is really, as regards its roof, an astonishing piece of architecture, covering an area of five hundred by one hundred and thirty feet without the support of either pillar or arch. The Russians are undoubtedly masters in the art of roof-building:

iron is the general material, laid on at a slight angle in sheets ribbed into each other and fitting by their own weight, and painted either in green or red: thus the roofs, far from offending the eye, are ornamental and have a general appearance of lightness; and the effect, as seen from an eminence, in opposition to the dazzling whiteness of the houses, is very agreeable.

The newness in the appearance of every thing in Moscow brings the catastrophe of 1812 perpetually before the mind as an ever-recurring reason to account for the absence of time-worn edifices, and venerable buildings in this the ancient capital of the empire: and certainly no other country boasting of two capitals can point to them as having been erected almost within the memory of man; for St. Petersburg has not been built more than one hundred and fifty years. A great number of the inhabitants of Moscow, who saw its fall, yet survive, and its destruction is not at all an unfrequent topic. They say that the number of houses which fell a prey to the flames amounted to 13,800, independently of palaces, churches, and other public edifices, and that the estimated loss of property equalled twenty millions of pounds sterling.

An eye-witness told me that Napoleon established his head-quarters at the Kremlin on the 15th of September, and that the fire broke out the same day among the shops of the Kitai

Gorod, and in the course of a few hours showed itself in many other quarters of the city. The night of the 16th gleamed luridly and fearfully, lit up with the flames of a general conflagration. Explosions, loud and violent, shook the ground, and combustibles, hurled wildly from the steeples and heaped up with self-devotion in their own halls by the patriotic inhabitants, and fired with the resolution of desperation, proclaimed at once the origin and purposes of a deed unparalleled in the annals of the world. Tongues of flame leaped across the roads, enveloping the buildings which they seemed barely to touch, spreading with a fearful velocity, but yet not commensurate with the devoted courage and urgency of the people. The horizon, illuminated to a distance of several miles, announced to the flying crowds that they were houseless and involved in one common ruin. The fire kindled, blazed, and sank, leaving in its train as it proceeded a black smoking waste, in which the line of streets could be distinguished only by the remains of calcined pillars and blackened stones. The terror of the scene was increased by a loud roaring sound like a troubled sea, caused by the fierce wind which the flames created by the exhaustion of the air. From time to time huge masses of buildings fell with a prodigious crash, and the bewildered eye could distinguish nothing but smoking ruins and a sea of flame. The knell of a bell sounded above the incessant roar of the flames like the

tocsin of alarm or the signal for renewed exertion; and still the fire spread, leaping from house to house as if impelled by an invisible power, and in defiance of the sentinels who were placed around the houses for their protection.

Notwithstanding that the city was principally constructed of wood, it was several days before the fire had expended itself; at last there remained so few houses from the wreck, that the streets were not discernible, and it became impossible to identify any spot as having been the site of a particular building. The scene of horror was completed by the shocking appearance of hundreds of human bodies half burnt or crushed beneath the fallen ruins, intermingled with the carcasses of horses and cattle calcined and contaminating the air.

Napoleon left the Kremlin when it was no longer considered safe, and sought an asylum in the country palace of Petrofsky, passing beneath arches of flame in his passage. He expressed his disbelief that the conflagration was a voluntary act. It was not till about the 20th of October that the French army fairly evacuated the district, when they attempted their last act of revenge in the destruction of the Kremlin. The night was profoundly dark when the fire first burst forth in the arsenal of the Kremlin, in the midst of which the report of the first explosion was distinctly audible, followed at short intervals by six others—

the springing of as many mines. Nothing could be more terrible; stones of large size were hurled to a distance of several hundred feet, and dashed into the surrounding apartments, carrying consternation and destruction with them. Every window was broken by the concussion; many of the buildings were shattered and their walls split; several of the towers on the walls and a portion of the walls themselves were thrown down; and the whole would doubtless have formed one mass of ruins, but for the strength of the old Tartar construction, which defied the blasts of the powder. Nature was not slow in wreaking vengeance on the spoliators, for the climate, strong in the severity of an unusually early winter, pressed hard on their track, and strewed the line of march with thousands of stiffened victims.

The presence of the scene where events have occurred not only revives the remembrance of them, but identifies us with them, and clothes them with a degree of personal interest. The thousands who have visited the plains of Waterloo, or stooped over the brazen plate on the deck of the Victory, where Nelson fell, have all experienced for the moment a deep feeling of interest—a kind of mental participation in the deeds which they before treated as matters of history—a feeling, too, considerably enhanced where the narrator of the scene has been an eye-witness and conversant with all the details. Such has been my

fortune in this instance; and hence you are indebted for this account of an oft-told tale, in the particulars of which there cannot be much deviation, although I have ventured to recapitulate what my informant saw.

What the horrors of the retreat from Moscow were, cannot be conceived; nor do I believe that any description can at all approach to the reality. Some years since I met with an intelligent French peasant, who had been a soldier, and had served through the campaign: his narrative was principally of a personal nature; but in describing the general feeling, he said that the men grew so callous from suffering, and the sight of death in its most terrible forms, that they were indifferent to life themselves, and without sympathy for others: he said he thought of it as a horrible dream, but that at the time it was *l'enfer réalisé.*

Complaints and reproaches were loudly uttered throughout the war against all countries as to their mode of treating their prisoners; but I do not believe that in any instance they were more deserved than by Russia. She certainly had deep wrongs to avenge, and had suffered severely from the ravages and reckless spoliation of the French soldiery; yet it was exacting heavy vengeance to march the miserable captives to Siberia, beyond almost the pale of human intercourse, where they remained forgotten and buried for years, and whence only a small remnant emerged long after the peace.

Siberia, with its exiles, is familiar to our ears, and the imagination embodies with it scenes of the deepest distress and suffering which we know in many cases, as in the Troubetzkoi family for instance, are not unreal; but the general feeling of those under the sentence of exile is not of that character. I have spent some hours in the prison in which these parties are confined, and have had good opportunities of judging of the state of their minds on the subject, and of their conduct when the final sentence was communicated to them; and certainly they evinced no apprehension nor deep distress on hearing their doom. To many, perhaps, the world has no ties, and any place is indifferent to them; but some there must be whose affections are still warm, and who cling to general associations and habits of intercourse from which the separation is to be as final as the tomb.

Much has been said on this subject, and terrors, which in fact do not exist to the extent supposed, are ascribed to it. It is to the system alone — the despotic dispensation of judgment — that the reproaches belong, and not to the punishment and its effects: I mean, of course, in its broad sense, without distinguishing the flagrant and inhuman instances of men condemned to a living interment in the mines, with labour for life, bereft of name and the commonest privileges of humanity. The terms, whether of exile or transportation, as regards criminals, are synonymous, and the effect of

the sentence in all countries is to sever every link of connection with society; but to the Russian this extremity of the evil is comparatively unknown, as his wife and children are allowed to bear him company, and to share his fortunes without the compulsion of labour. The policy of this arrangement is obvious; yet whatever the motive may be, it is a boon which softens the lot, and is appreciated as an act of mercy. Many a noble spirit among our own countrywomen would, if permitted, follow the fortunes of her unhappy partner; and it is most certain that the extension of such a privilege would do much to reclaim even the hardened offender, by making him sensible that even in his punishment the feelings of humanity have not been lost sight of. Besides, under the existing system, the punishment of the husband falls with crushing severity on the wife; who, thrown on her own exertions for support, the scorn of her neighbours, and shunned probably as an infected thing, sinks into abject poverty and want; and finally, under the accumulation of evils, is forced to throw herself on her parish and becomes a public burthen. The subject is worth consideration.

To many an offender in Russia, the day which proclaims to him his sentence of exile may be considered as that of freedom. The slow march of justice, and the delays which necessarily occur in getting evidence from distant parts of the

country, make the imprisonment preliminary to the trial almost indefinite; and thus the exchange to free air and comparative liberty is a welcome boon. To the criminals of the worst class only, who are condemned to the mines for life, is the exile clothed with terrors; to the reputed vagrant and minor offender the exchange is infinitely to his advantage. Compelled to leave his abandoned and vagabond life, he is sent into a new country to colonize it, and to work out his reformation with benefit to himself; for, placed under a strict surveillance, his time must be applied to useful and active pursuits. As the initiatory step he is removed, after his trial, from the common prison to that exclusively devoted to the exiles, on the Sparrow hills at Moscow; whither all offenders intended for the same destination are marched, as to a common centre, from all parts of the empire. A plain and insecure wooden building of considerable extent, guarded without by a few sentinels, is the only barrier between him and freedom: he knows his doom, and yet he makes no effort to escape, conscious, perhaps, that the ubiquitous arm of the police would soon arrest his useless flight; in fact the facilities for escape look like as many inducements, were it not for the restraining power which declares every attempt hopeless. The internal discipline and arrangement of this anomalous receptacle are lax to the last degree, and there is no attempt at classi-

fication either as regards sex or the nature of the offence. The friends of the prisoners are allowed free access to them, and even to remain for days with them; thus the captives and the free, indiscriminately mixed, occupy the vast barrack-like rooms without regard to comfort or decency—decency, that is, in our acceptation of the term, and in what we consider necessary to the decorous conduct and regulations of a prison; for to the Russian, accustomed to herd with his whole family on the top of his stove, and to have but one common apartment, there is no idea of impropriety nor feeling of indelicacy in this indiscriminate assemblage.

A committee selected from among the most respectable inhabitants of the city are the appointed visitors of the prison, whose duty it is to attend, especially on the days (every Sunday) when the detachments are marched off to their destination. It is a most humane proceeding, and its good effects are manifest by the excellent arrangements and great consideration shown to the comforts and wishes of the prisoners. There is not the slightest attempt to throw any judicial importance into the scene, nor is it rendered imposing by an array of officials, or the ceremonies of a court. The governor and his secretary, with a few members of the committee, pass from ward to ward, where the names of the parties are called out, thus:—"Ivan Ivanovitch, you have been

found guilty of deserting your master, and are sentenced to be sent to Siberia to colonise;" or, "you have been convicted of murder, and are sentenced to Siberia to work the mines; have you any reason to give, or request to make, why you should not depart this day?" The man expects his brother, or some other relation, in a week or a fortnight, and begs for that delay, which is immediately granted: and thus the roster is gone through.

The scene is then transferred to a yard, where the parties are all collected; several barrels of qvass, and abundance of bread, are provided for their refreshment, and a priest furnishes each person with a book of prayers, and other religious works; what little money they may have is taken from them, to prevent their losing it, or being plundered on the road, and a receipt is given them for the full amount; which they are entitled to reclaim on their arrival. All this is excellent and praiseworthy, but the worst is to follow. Piles of chains and an anvil tell the tale of suffering to be endured on the weary march, and as the men are arranged in little squads of six or eight individuals, the manacles are fixed, which are not to be removed till the journey is accomplished. Single individuals have irons riveted round the ankles connected with chains fastened round the waist, and thus are comparatively free in their movements; but others, being handcuffed and linked

to a long chain passing from one to the other, are entirely dependent on each other's will as they walk in file. The day's march is about twelve miles, and thus the journey occupies at least four months, during which time the chains are not removed, nor the arrangement altered. It is worse than hardship; it is torture. The women prisoners are without bonds, and bring up the rear of the procession with the little carts containing the baggage of the party, and the wives and children who have selected a voluntary exile. The caravan is accompanied by a guard of soldiers, whose responsibility is of so penal a character, that they are made to take the place and suffer the sentence of any prisoner who may escape. On this occasion I saw eighty individuals out of a body of about two hundred prisoners take their departure.

While in the prison I expressed a wish to Dr. Haas, a philanthropic individual, who has spent his whole life and fortune, after the example of our Howard, in attempting to mitigate the horrors of a prison, and to reform its inmates, to see the effects of the knout. He immediately called out and desired any person who had undergone the punishment to come forward, when a young woman of about twenty presented herself, and without the slightest hesitation or compunction, bared her back. A twelvemonth had elapsed since the punishment had been inflicted, which in her

case had been confined to five lashes. The wounds had, of course, long healed, and the skin was perfectly smooth over them, but five red marks of a finger's breadth each, and of considerable length, were indelibly imprinted between her shoulders, as if branded by fire. Her crime, which she had besides to expiate in Siberia, was the burning her master's dwelling-house.

I have never seen philanthropy carried so far, nor gratitude so deeply expressed as with reference to Dr. Haas. His appearance in the prison was the signal for tumultuous joy; the poor creatures crowded around him, hung upon him, kissing his hands, and even his feet, and loading him with blessings for his cares and attentions; many begged his intercessions, and none begged in vain: —it was a lesson of mercy. At his own cost, and from his own resources, he has established and maintains an excellent hospital connected with the prison; and, in short, his self-sacrifice is so great, that he has restricted himself almost to poverty to carry out his principles of benevolence. Though scrupulously clean, his garments are the emblems of his self-denial, and more to be honoured than the ermined robes of royalty. He has nobly fulfilled his self-imposed duty, and warmed many a heart that was cheerless, and thought itself utterly friendless and forsaken.

Jews are barely tolerated in Russia, and they are loaded with many insults and hardships, while

the Mussulman is protected and privileged. In this very prison we found, in a little secluded cell, which they had appropriated, a whole Jewish family, the father of whom was under sentence to Siberia for an alleged charge of smuggling; but for two years he had contrived, probably by bribes, to get his term delayed, in the hopes of obtaining pardon. He was a noble-looking old man, bowed down by care and distress; and as he came forth, removing his little fur cap, with his family hanging around him, begging us, by the God we worshipped in common, to have pity on him and to intercede for him, the graphic scenes of Scott rushed vividly to my recollection, and I could fancy I saw before me the prototype of Isaac of York in the tale of Ivanhoe. Poor man! his case wrung my soul; for what could I, as a stranger, do? and it was mercy to tell him so. As he retreated, with a hopeless sigh, to his cell, I thought of Sterne's captive: "I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of heart it is which arises from hope deferred."

If my thoughts were diverted by another incident, it was only for a moment; for this unfortunate being occupied my mind for many an hour after. A comical-looking man came bowing up to me and begged me to hear his tale, for perhaps something might be done for him. He also was a Jew and had embraced Christianity, but had

relapsed; for which he was to be sent to Siberia; the authorities had no faith in his profession, but he declared he was sincere and would become a Christian again would they but release him. "Look," said he, "how they have disfigured me;" and he removed his cap, exhibiting a head shaved completely as to one side of it. It is the custom to shave the heads of convicts in this manner; distinguishing soldiers from civilians by shaving the former from back to front, and the latter across from ear to ear.—This man was a soldier.

These applications for interference and intercession speak volumes as to the power of the constituted authorities; whose prerogatives, whether of punishment or of mercy, are controlled by no law and are subject to no influence in the exercise of either of them. Slavery and abject humility must always exist where the people are under the protection of no law, and the magnates of the land are restricted by no sense of duty nor of right.

The violence of the rain, which has been falling incessantly for the last two days, seems to augur a continuance of bad weather; I have therefore resolved, rather suddenly, to turn my steps back to St. Petersburg, and to avail myself of the chances of the remainder of the season to return to England through Sweden. However, you shall hear again from me at St. Petersburg when my plan is fixed; for I am compelled to remain there ten

days, at the least, to go through the form of advertising my intended departure three times in the gazette:—a precaution taken by the government to prevent people absconding from their creditors, any one of whom has the power to put an embargo on the passport, and to detain his debtor till his claim is satisfied.

LETTER XX.

Return to St. Petersburg. — Overflowing of the Volga. — Travelling at Speed. — Mosquitoes. — Scenery round St. Petersburg. — Russian Love of Flowers. — Botanical Gardens on Apothecary's Island. — Rise of the Neva. — Official Treatment of Inventors. — The Emperor the Centre of the Industrial System. — His Liberality. — Extortion by the Authorities. — The Russian Senate. — Government Monopoly of Spirits. — Russian Drunkards. — Incessant Salutes of the Guard on Duty. — The Almacks of St. Petersburg. — Dangerous Masquerade Frolic. — Imperial Practical Joke. — Female Flattery of the Emperor. — Wit and Bonhomie of the Grand Duke Michael.

St. Petersburg.

AGAIN I am established in my old quarters, and, after having had the luxury of a true Russian bath, experience no feeling of fatigue from the journey; which struck me as being more monotonous than before, arising doubtless from the contrast between the scenes I had left, and the weary flat I was traversing. The rain had fallen so abundantly that, on arriving at Tver, we found the Volga had risen fourteen feet, overflowing its banks, and had carried away the bridge of boats which crossed the stream. After a delay of several hours a kind of patch-work affair was con-

structed, by the exertions of some engineer officers, over which our carriage scrambled in safety. To make up for lost time we were driven at additional speed, and at some little hazard, reckless of obstacles and obstructions. At Zimagoy, for instance, a large village consisting of one long street, we fairly charged into an immense herd of oxen; the affrighted beasts, with one accord, set off at their top speed, clearing the street of every passenger by the tremendous front they offered, and fairly galloped before us, till at the termination of the village they were enabled to disperse into the open ground and permit us to pass. The scene was highly ludicrous; but had any thing stood in the way of their progress, the result must have been fatal.

At night the musquitoes swarmed to a frightful extent, but the only annoyance I experienced from them was in their trumpeting sound; my companion however was not so fortunate, for they attacked him without mercy, and he is now in bed suffering under fever with swelled hands and face, and literally blind.

I am convinced that no traveller should approach St. Petersburg from the south, for however tedious the steppes may be, he is yet leaving a more agreeable landscape and a better climate. St. Petersburg as a starting-point will hold its ground, but it will not bear a comparison after Moscow; and as regards scenery it may be said to be iso-

lated, for its surrounding territory is enough to deter any person from attempting a closer acquaintance with it. The islands form a slight exception as they are agreeably planted and studded with villas, many of which are tastefully designed, in the midst of ornamental gardens and lawns: but the prevailing love for Italian architecture is not fitted to the pale blue sky of the climate nor to the general effect of the landscape clothed only with the birch and fir. Flowers in profusion decorate every disposable spot, and the repose and elegance of the scene convey the idea of more favoured lands: but in truth the duration of the picture extends only to a few weeks; after which time what was gay and fashionable is deserted as a wilderness, the houses are closed, the plants removed to glass houses, and the inhabitants fled into the city.

The love of flowers is a striking and pleasing feature of the Russian character: they decorate their houses with them and nurse them throughout the winter with the utmost solicitude. Ivy, which is not indigenous in the country, is made to serve a pretty and ornamental purpose in their drawing-rooms; they contrive a little frame of light lattice-work on wheels, over which the ivy is made to twine, forming a pleasant and refreshing-looking arbour under which the lady of the house ensconces herself in a kind of rural retirement.

One of the islands above alluded to is distin-

guished as the Apothecary's island, from its containing the botanical gardens; which, indeed, occupy its whole surface. I am afraid to say or guess the extent which is covered in with glass, but it is something prodigious, forming one unbroken range with internal divisions to separate the different classes of plants; these, as regards the tropical and the larger deciduous ones, are set in the soil and flourish in great luxuriance. The whole establishment is in excellent condition and reflects the highest credit on the government, or rather on the Emperor, who provides the heavy funds necessary for its maintenance. Everything in this country, no matter of what character, is done with reference to the winter; and from habit the same ever-recurring reason suggests itself to a stranger to account for many singularities: thus in this garden or conservatory I forgot for the moment that the fir-tree is the only evergreen in the north of Russia, and was surprised to find the laurel and the holly as much petted as the palm and the sugar-cane; and from the same cause I made a passing remark that it was late to force peaches and nectarines, forgetting that even cherries must be grown under glass. With the exception of the arctic plants and animals, man is the only being which can accommodate himself to the violent extremes of climate, and support life under its vicissitudes: these must be tried to be understood; the thermometer at 84° of Fahren-

heit and at 22° below zero, which I have experienced, are trying differences.

It has been blowing strong for several days from the W. and S. W., throwing the current of the Neva back on its source by the pressure of the waters of the Gulf; the river has in consequence risen many feet, and several of the canals have encroached on the streets; the red flag of danger is hoisted at the citadel, and alarm guns are being fired from time to time: if the wind should subside all will be right in a few hours, otherwise we may expect mischief. This phenomenon has naturally a contrary effect on the southern shores of the Baltic; whence the waters recede to an extraordinary extent, stopping the navigation of the Trave and reducing Lubeck to the condition of an inland town.

The Emperor is gone to Warsaw, the nobility have left for their estates or to travel, and the bulk of the military are still at the camp at Krasnoe Celo, so that the city is dull and half deserted. A few travellers have made their appearance, many of whom are interested in the introduction of some discovery or invention which they wished to sell to the Emperor; who has the reputation for rewarding most liberally those who really have anything substantial to recommend them. One person has the secret of some mechanical power to be applied to pumps and fire-engines, another has got some extraordinary improvement

in the system of founding cannon, or in making the musket more effective, and these men, suspicious to a degree, refuse to exhibit the proof of their schemes unless they are furnished with a guarantee that they shall be remunerated if they produce the promised results: the government, on the other hand, listens to them, demands a practical demonstration, and leads them on with promises, hoping to extort the secret and secure the benefit without payment; amusing them, in fact, and contriving delays to weary out their patience till they succeed in their object, or the disappointed applicant returns to his country in disgust.

There is something of the national character in this tricky kind of negotiation; although prudence is certainly necessary when so many adventurers flock to the country in the hopes of enriching themselves by one good coup. In any other country private enterprize or a public company would carry out beneficial inventions, but here the Emperor represents every interest, and in him alone is concentrated the application of the industry of the empire: moreover, there is hardly a branch of manufacture that is not carried on as an Imperial establishment. The liberality of the Emperor acts as an inducement to these fortune-hunters, who look to Russia as the El dorado for speculators. The captain of an English merchant vessel direct from the West Indies presented his Majesty lately with "a fine lively turtle," which

was acknowledged by the gift of a splendid diamond ring; and an American gentleman has just received a similar token for a pretty little model of a locomotive steam-carriage. On the other hand, the Kamschatka steam-frigate, a vessel of 2500 tons, built by order in the United States, has arrived out with its constructor to claim the payment of his work; but difficulties are thrown in his way and objections raised, for which he will have to pay most handsomely. It is alleged that he has exceeded the terms of the contract, that the principle of the engines is not good; that in point of fact the authorities mean to have a slice of the cake before they give in their report to the Emperor to pay for it. One necessary consequence of this system of extortion is, that the cost is always so arranged that it will bear the official deductions and perquisites without injury or loss to the claimant; an imposition which the Emperor has to pay for to a disgraceful extent, and is the inevitable result of a mode of government which, assuming everything to itself, is compelled in the multiplicity of its duties to trust to the reports of others for the execution of what it purposes.

The senate represents no public interest, but rather the Emperor himself; who delegates to it the examination and consideration of projects and laws he may have in contemplation, and on which they make a report; it is not a debating assembly but is divided into committees, according to the

nature of the subjects submitted to them for deliberation. The number of members is unlimited, and they are nominated by the Emperor, and receive a certain salary.

The only portion of the revenue that is farmed out, or allowed to be contracted for, is, I believe, that derived from the sale of spirits. The government distils a fiery and pernicious spirit from rye, termed Wadki; which they sell to the contracting party, who bedevils it in his own way, keeping it within a limited standard of strength, and sells it to the retail dealers. Here again is a monopoly of manufacture secured by the government; which, to add to the evil, stimulates the national vice by exacting the highest possible terms for its fiery compound.

There is not a European country in which the expression of "something to drink" is not used as the term for claiming a recompense for a service performed; the *na Wadki* of the Russians, the *pour boire* of the French, the *Trinkgeld* of the Germans, and the *Dinero para beber* of the Spaniards, to say nothing of the innumerable applications for potations in our own country, are homogeneous phrases. The Russian, however, rarely indulges at the moment; he waits for a convenient time, or till the inclination is strong upon him, and then quaffs off his draught at one breath, creating instantaneous intoxication. He knows nothing of the progressive stages from sobriety to

drunkenness, and is not led on by circumstance or society; but, predetermined and without companionship, he swallows a measure sufficient to secure his purpose. It is no uncommon thing to see a helpless sack-looking object thrown across a droschky or bundled into a cart; it is a helpless mujik, so brutally drunk that the police have picked him out of the gutter and are conveying him to the police station to cool himself. Other inducements for idleness and dissipation are not wanting, for the many holydays allowed by the Church and permitted as fête days or anniversaries of the members of the Imperial family, are taken advantage of to their fullest extent. In the winter time inebriety meets with its own punishment; as many a miserable wretch, staggering along in his helplessness, falls and sleeps to awake no more.

The absence of the court and of most of the military men of rank makes a perceptible difference in the duties of the men on guard at the different stations throughout the city. It is now a mechanical and comparatively careless performance, while before it was anxious and unceasing; for the sentry on one side and a look-out man on the other were ever straining themselves to detect in the passing crowds the flowing plume of the officer of rank, in time to summon the guards to turn out to salute. The frequency of these calls, and the haste necessary to meet the speed of the great man's equipage, have compelled them to adopt a

simple process: each musket rests on a little prop, close to the soldier's number in his company, and a raised line running the length of the platform enables every man to "dress" as he steps into his place; thus, when the sentry pulls his little bell, as the signal for the turn-out, the line is formed and arms presented in an incredibly short space of time. The same respect is shown to funerals, as the cortége passes; so that, what with the living and the dead, the duty of a guard is a most harassing affair. It is no exaggeration when I say that I have seen the guard on the Admiralty square turn out five times in as many minutes. Imagine this to be going on when the winter is at its severest point, and the men are forced to be relieved every ten minutes.

I have to-day had pointed out to me a young man of high family connected with the Cadet corps, whose success in life is insured by a singular circumstance, which is worth relating. I must carry you back to an early season of the year, at the period of the nobility balls as they are called; the Almack's, in fact, of St. Petersburg, and which I believe I have omitted to describe to you. The ball-room is considered to be the finest in Europe, and certainly it does not belie its character; it is on an immense scale. The centre, devoted to dancing, is sunk several feet below the common level, and around it rows of seats like those of an amphitheatre accommodate the sitters-

by and the lookers-on; behind them a fine colonnade, which supports the roof, forms a kind of broad gallery, where the card-players are busy, and the disengaged parties promenade without interruption to the dancers. A box placed in a commanding position is prepared for the accommodation of the Imperial family, some of whom generally attend. Often towards the conclusion of the ball a masquerade is permitted; that is, ladies appear in domino and in mask, and the gentleman throws a little black scarf over the shoulder.

It was at one of these masquerades that the following incident took place. It is the privilege of the maskers to accost any one they please, to walk with them; and, in short, to select a person they know in order to mystify him. The Emperor generally attends, and seems to enjoy the matter vastly; and is often taken by the arm by one of the unknown fair ones; he however exercises his own choice also, and frequently attempts to penetrate the disguise. Struck by the elegance of figure and costume of one party, he addressed the person, and taking the individual into his private room insisted on knowing who the person was, and that the mask should be removed. The party pleaded for mercy, declared that the Emperor's anger would be kindled, and that absolute ruin must be the issue of the discovery. The Emperor promised forgiveness under any circumstances, and pledged his word that no resentment of his should

fall for any offence; whereupon the disguise was removed and a cadet stood confessed before him. The Emperor's rage was excessive; but at last he said to the trembler before him, "You have broken the rules of the service by being absent from your corps; you have befooled me, and have ventured on exacting a pledge from me, for which you deserve the severest punishment; but I will keep my promise, on condition that you resume your disguise and commence an intrigue with my brother the Grand Duke Michael, making an appointment with him in the court of your corps at noon to-morrow; at which hour I shall give directions that you shall be put on guard there: be silent and I will protect you." The scheme was well carried out, the appointment made, and at noon the Grand Duke made his appearance, followed close by the Emperor; who, accosting him, taxed him at once with his object, and drawing him up to the cadet inquired whether any lady had been there. After some bantering, he disclosed the trick, at which they both laughed immoderately; the Grand Duke promising to befriend the boy, and the Emperor at once attaching him to his own person.

Personal flattery is not spared; for I overheard a mask hanging on the Emperor's arm say "Ah! tu es beau:" I caught only a portion of the reply, "Bah! tu me flattes." The mask was right, and many a party to whom the Emperor addressed

himself in the course of the evening thought as she did; for he chatted familiarly with many of the younger ladies.

The Grand Duke Michael is believed to be an austere and violent man; but those who know him say that he assumes that character from public motives, and that he is at heart good-natured, a great humourist, and an inveterate punster. It is certain that hardly a bon-mot gets into circulation without the authorship being imputed to him.

Postscript.

I have delayed sending this letter till I could tell you positively the line of route for my return; it is definitively fixed, and I take my passage on Friday in the Fürst Menchikoff steamer for Revel and Helsingfors, on my way to Stockholm. Notwithstanding its many drawbacks I shall leave St. Petersburg with regret, and not without a hope of revisiting it; it contains many elements of happiness: but here, as elsewhere, much depends on ourselves and on our own habits and pursuits.

LETTER XXI.

Voyage to Revel. — Russian Ladies in search of Sea Air. — Exclusiveness on Board the Steamer. — Obsequious Intruder. — The Russian Fleet. — Situation of Revel. — Unburied Corpse of a Ducal Debtor. — Scenery of Helsingfors. — Passage to Abo. — Tranquil Scene. — Home Associations. — A Night on a Garden Bench. — Views from the Observatory of Abo. — Labyrinth of Islets. — Aland. — Ceremonious Reception. — Russian Possession of Aland. — Vicissitudes of the Seasons. — Arrival at Stockholm. — Paper Currency of Stockholm. — Twopence-halfpenny Notes — Pouches for Paper-money. — Palace at Stockholm. — Island Suburbs. — Scenery. — Appearance of Stockholm. — The Ridderholm. — Tombs of Gustavus Adolphus and Charles the Twelfth. — Clothes of Charles the Twelfth. — Opinions as to his Death. — Character and Career of Bernadotte. — His Person and Mode of Life. — Policy of the Russian Emperor. — Romance of Regality. — Dronningholm. — Veneration for Linnæus. — Decorations of the Palace.

Stockholm.

By some mistake I have lost a post day, and thus have been here a week, without having been able to write, apprising you of my arrival. My voyage was agreeable, and I am highly delighted with my progress thus far. The passengers from St. Petersburg were numerous; chiefly ladies, bound to Revel and Helsingfors, for what they in their simplicity called sea air. They were new to the

water, and their exclamations, as we lost sight of land, were sufficiently absurd; but a slight ripple realised all their ideas of being at sea, since it produced qualms, and eventually the sickness itself, which they had been ridiculing. The cabins were crowded by those who had secured sleeping places; or rather the steamer was divided into three classes, viz. the saloon, fore cabin, and deck: the former being full, I naturally selected the deck, paying saloon price for the privilege of being aft; but when dinner was announced and I was making my way into the cabin, I was peremptorily stopped, with the intimation that deck passengers, no matter of what grade, were not allowed to dine in the saloon, but would mess afterwards with the engineer, steward, &c. A scene is of all things the one most to be avoided, and particularly where one is the weakest. I therefore told the steward that I was in the habit of choosing my own society, and, declining the honour he proposed to me, insisted on being served on deck, or he would receive no fee from me at the termination of the voyage. I had the Russian at my mercy on that point; his cupidity was touched, and no attention or servility could exceed his. I vowed, however, that I would expose the system in the Hamburg and German papers, as a caution to voyagers against the Fürst Menchikoff; and this led a most repulsive-looking man to attempt to explain the circumstance: he talked of the necessity of a dis-

tinction, said how hard it fell in some cases, and made a variety of other excuses. I huffed my man off as well as I could, and tried to prevent his fixing himself on me; but he was a limpet, a perfect old man of the sea, and would not understand a cold shoulder. At last he unlocked a large square box at his elbow, and displaying a canteen well filled with bottles, urged me to take a bottle of Rhenish with him; it was, as he declared, *ächter Steinberger Cabinet*, which, being a bon vivant, he was remarkably choice of. Had it been nectar of the gods, I could not have received it from such hands; for I had taken a rooted dislike to the man from his appearance; and besides, I could not understand the motive for the wretch's civility: it was explained afterwards by my discovering that he was an owner of the boat.

The night was fine, and, wrapping myself in my cloak, I slept soundly: at daylight we were drawing into the shore in the bay of Revel, and at seven o'clock we anchored. Madame D—— and her two daughters with whom I had formed an acquaintance on board, besides having met them at St. Petersburg, seeing me prepare to go on shore, begged that we might form one party and breakfast together in the town. After some trouble we succeeded in finding a kind of inn, where we established ourselves; but hardly were the cutlets on the table than the disgusting monster

of the steam-boat entered, and actually seated himself with the intention of joining us: this, however, was beyond my patience, and I peremptorily insisted on his removal; reminding him that he was not a saloon passenger, and must, according to the rules of his own vessel, take his meal with the servants. After much remonstrance, as it was the only room in the house for guests, he was allowed to have a table to himself; and with that our intercourse ceased.

The Russian fleet is divided into three squadrons, occupying as many ports; namely Cronstadt, Revel, and Helsingfors. We found a considerable force at anchor in the port of Revel, which is completely embayed and protected by the surrounding hills; which, besides being well wooded and really picturesque, had additional charms to the eye so long used to the unvarying flatness and uniformity of the scene we had left. The town is built on a sharp eminence, and is as old and irregular as any lover of antiquity could desire; but the short time at our disposal, while the steam-boat was taking in fresh coals, only permitted us to reach the Nicolai church, where the unburied body, or rather mummy, of one of the Dukes de la Croix is exposed to the curious, in the full costume of his day: in fact the same which he wore while living. It appears that the old gentleman died very much in debt some hundred and fifty years since, and by the law of the period his

creditors prevented his remains being buried till their demands were satisfied; this was never done, and what they refused no one has since volunteered to perform. The singularity of the body being preserved from decay, and the curiosity of the dress, attract many a visitor to the apartment, where the sexton has installed his patron, as he calls the defunct; and certainly the ample velvet coat, full wig and point lace cravat and ruffles, shrouding the same form which they clothed so many years since, possess a certain degree of interest, as conveying a more vivid idea of the costume of those days than any pictorial representation could do.

The limit allotted to us having now expired, we hurried on board and were soon under weigh for the opposite shore, with a reduced complement of passengers. It was late in the afternoon of a splendid day that we approached Helsingfors; threading through such a succession of islands, that in fact it appeared as if we had left the gulf, and were deep in some inland navigation. To come suddenly and unexpectedly on a range of beautiful scenery gives an additional zest to the pleasure we derive; and to confess the truth I was completely taken by surprise. The port is defended by a remarkably strong citadel, or rather a cluster of forts, constructed on seven islands at about two miles from the town; which now breaks upon the view. It has, I believe, been rebuilt

within the last thirty years, and looks new and fresh, the white houses rising gradually up the side of a hill which is surmounted by the church. I wandered helplessly about for a long time seeking accommodation; for I had arrived in a country which is without the luxury of a legitimate inn. At last I addressed myself to an officer, and briefly explained my predicament. He good-naturedly introduced me into a house; which here, as in other parts of Finland and Sweden, is called the Society's house, and answers in some respects to an inn; though it is a kind of nondescript between a café and a club. However I got a very tolerable dinner, and the use of a room for my ablutions. As the steam-boat which was to take me on to Abo was not to leave till two o'clock in the morning, I had ample time to saunter round the town, and to gain one or two beautiful points of view from the neighbouring eminences. The population cannot exceed 10,000 souls; but, as the place is the capital of Finland, and is the seat of the university since the destruction of Abo by fire in 1827, it bids fair to become of some importance. The site is admirably chosen, both as regards the picturesque and for the means of defence, and the natural harbour affords a secure dock for that portion of the fleet which winters within it.

I had arranged for my onward passage in an office which led me to expect by its appearance

and the formalities of the agent, accommodation superior to the Fürst Menchikoff; but imagine my surprise, as I groped my way on board the Abo boat, to find myself among a cargo of oxen, through which I had to work to reach the stern of the vessel. The return of daylight explained this arrangement; and the good-humoured civility of the little skipper made his craft far more agreeable than the haughty exclusiveness and artificial consequence of the Fürst Menchikoff. The vessel was as large, but was decked only fore and aft, the midship being open and appropriated entirely to the transport of cattle; they proved to be no annoyance, and the unpretending arrangements for the passengers were enhanced by an anxiety to please. Our society was small but agreeable and friendly — a Russian general taking his young wife to Abo to meet her parents; some other officers, a Swedish baron, a Danish general returning from a mission to St. Petersburg, and two or three students.

At no period of our passage were we really in open water, the islands thickening as we advanced; some barren rocks, and others clothed to the water's edge with fir trees; few inhabited, and those only by solitary fishermen, whose little huts gave the only indications of life. It was a beautiful day, and the waters were as a sheet of glass, showing distinctly the ripples of the numerous wild-fowl as they swam by, and the lazy plunge

of the seal as it scrambled off the rocks at our approach. It was the most peaceful scene I have ever witnessed: it was Sunday, and nature was in harmony with the day of rest: the very birds seemed to possess a sense of protection; for, unalarmed by the steam-boat, they floated on the water within gun-shot, and stood preening themselves on the rocky islets, so close that I could distinguish their varieties with my naked eye. I have made a vow to read this page of the book of nature a little closer; and if ever I have the power, I will spend a month in the spring of the year to learn a little more of these my favourites.

It was evening as we neared Abo, whose now forsaken observatory, perched high on an eminence, we had occasionally caught glimpses of in the distance; and, after following the sinuosities of a creek imbedded in hills of rock, the town suddenly opened on our view, and we were moored alongside a vessel from Hull. It was a fragment of English; and, notwithstanding my cosmopolitish feelings, my heart glowed and vibrated as if the chord of home had been touched, the home of my early recollections and affections, for the later ones bore no fruit of promise. Again I was a wanderer in search of shelter, and again I found it in a Society's house; but the rest I required, after the fatigue of the three previous days and exposure at night on the deck, was impossible; for the room swarmed with vermin,

which sprang into activity before I lost consciousness in sleep. I passed the night on a bench in the garden, the only safe place I could have found, as the landlord told me, for the whole town is infested with these scourges of rest, beyond all belief.

The Stockholm steamer was not to leave till daylight the next morning, so I had a long day before me; some hours of which I spent enjoying a beautiful panoramic view from the observatory, which stands on the top of a high naked rock of red granite; the open sea is nowhere visible, and a labyrinth of islands studding the surface of the water gives it the appearance of a large ornamental lake. The town is essentially dull, but the environs are pretty and well wooded; diversified with crags and huge masses of granite scattered wildly over the surface of the land.

For obvious reasons connected with the last night's discomforts, and afraid of the risks of even the cabin sofa, I again took up my quarters on the deck, and slept till we got under weigh at daylight. Our whole course was through a labyrinth of small rocks and islets, many of them covered with firs and aspens to the water's edge; some few green and beautiful, but the greater number barren and rugged, inhabited by flocks of water-fowl and aquatic birds, and frequented by numerous seals which plunged slowly into the water as the vessel approached them. The scenery

resembles the Cyclades so famous in ancient story. Sometimes the passage leads through channels of only twenty or thirty feet in breadth; sometimes the water opens into a considerable expanse, and often there appears to be no outlet on any side. It is astonishing how the sailors so exactly know this track in this intricate and perplexing maze, through which nothing but experience could conduct them.

These islets are so small that even a map on a large scale can give no idea of their numbers: look, for instance, at Aland, it seems to occupy the centre of the entrance to the gulf of Bothnia, and to stand conspicuous; and yet we approached it as one of a countless group, giving no indication of its comparative superiority in size, till we moored alongside a quay, and found that it contained a small town, whose inhabitants flocked down to find a change from their monotony in our poor steam-boat.

Aland is a military station of some importance, as being on the frontiers of the empire; and our passengers landed to go round the fortifications, while the captain arranged his little local traffic. Being still within the Russian dominions they were necessarily in uniform, and were received with honours; and in this obscure islet there was as much ceremony for the moment, as if it had been a reception at St. Petersburg: officers in full uniform jostling each other, and well-dressed

ladies in Parisian fashions claiming the privilege of introduction.

This island was betrayed to the Russians,—sold is the more correct term,—and, by a singular freak of fortune, one of our passengers, a colonel of engineers, who was making a rapid official inspection of the works within the citadel, was the son of the very man who betrayed it, and went over to the Russian service. This treason was consummated in the winter, after the place had undergone a long and almost fruitless siege; and the Russian troops were compelled to pass over on the ice, in order to take possession. Strange vicissitude of seasons! the scene of to-day is hushed and glowing under an intense heat; and in a few short weeks, an iron frost will make this arm of the Baltic a solid highway.

After a passage of about sixty hours we approached Stockholm; but the sinuosities of our course, the projecting headlands, and the constant intervention of the islands, gave us no opportunity of catching a glimpse of the city till we were fairly within its limits. It is so embayed, and the sea itself so broken by islands, and closed in by high crags, that it assumes entirely the character of river scenery.

Under the guidance of a knave of a valet-de-place, I was occupied for two good hours after I landed in endeavouring to find a lodging, for he

assured me there was no inn; and it is hard to say how long he would thus have amused himself at my expense, had I not luckily met a gentleman, whom I had seen at St. Petersburg, who at once directed me to a very comfortable place,—the Hotel de Commerce.

I was in the most awkward predicament from want of money, for mine being all in Russian gold, and not current, I could find no one to change it; at last, as a high favour, the Russian consul assisted me. If stacks of notes constitute wealth, I was a rich man, for I was in possession of bundles; but the amount they represented made but a sorry figure when reduced to pounds sterling. The currency is almost exclusively of paper, and to accommodate this to meet the cheapness of articles, these notes go as low in value as twopence halfpenny, but then there is always some mental calculation necessary to arrange the most trifling expenditure, as the payments are made in paper to meet a charge in banco; it requires some practice, and is excessively troublesome. This load of paper cannot be conveniently carried about the person like other money, and therefore occasions a singular custom, which I did not perceive the meaning of at first. I had noticed people wearing round their necks, by a steel chain, a large clasped bag or reticule, not unlike the tobacco-pouches of the Germans, and which I really believed were used for the same purpose;

but they are literally purses to hold these extraordinary halfpennyworth's of paper.

The leading feature of Stockholm is the palace, but the descriptions given of it are considerably over-rated; it has been unjustly placed above those of the other Northern capitals, while it is only superior to that of Copenhagen as regards situation, and is infinitely inferior to the winter palace at St. Petersburg in every respect. Standing in the centre of the city in a commanding position on the shore of the Baltic, which there assumes the appearance of an inland lake, bordered by a broad and massive quay, it loses much of its importance from the want of extent, or open space, on two sides of it. It is an oblong square, fronting every way; and though vast in dimensions, it is destitute of all architectural ornament to assist its proportions or relieve the monotony of the general effect. The front commands a most pleasing and attractive view, the extent of water being broken by a number of small islands, the sides of which are studded with public buildings and well-built houses; in fact, the islands are so thick, that almost every magazine of naval and military stores occupies a detached one, connected with the main land by floating bridges, or communicating with it by a multitude of ferry-boats propelled by crews of Dalecarlian women.

The scenery altogether is of a wild and romantic character, broken and undulating in some places,

while in others the dark granite rock rises sheer out of the water to a considerable height, clothed with firs and hardy shrubs. The appearance of the city has a great resemblance to what Hamburg was before the conflagration, as regards the style of the houses and the arrangement of the streets, and is equally as remarkable for the variety of the peasants' costume. It is more the general effect of the city, than any individual points or buildings, which distinguishes it, and gives so much charm to the landscape.

Some of the public edifices are not without pretensions, especially the Ridderholm; which, externally, has the appearance of a church, its tall slender steeple of open iron-work, resembling, on a large scale, the beautiful ornaments in Berlin work, which were at one time so generally worn. It is solely appropriated as a mausoleum for the sovereigns of Sweden, and may therefore be very appropriately considered as an historical monument. The interior is devoid of all architectural ornament, and, indeed, is too simple for a building of such magnitude and external pretensions. In the centre is ranged a long row of equestrian figures, wearing the armour of the early kings, and of the chiefs who distinguished themselves in the Thirty Years' War. The two principal tombs are those erected over the remains of Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII.; but they possess no merit as works of art, being in fact but plain sarcophagi;

the latter has a club and lion's skin sculptured on the top, while the former is simply adorned with a trophy composed of the actual armour of the hero; of which the sword, a ponderous two-handed weapon, is not the least remarkable.

It is singular that the deaths of these two monarchs, both the greatest warriors of their day, should be wrapt in mystery; for although they both fell in battle, or rather in the face of the enemy, yet the suspicion has always existed that the blows were struck by assassin's hands. The clothes which Charles XII. wore when he fell, are carefully preserved in a glass case by the side of his tomb; and an inspection of his hat throws strong doubt over the historical version of his death. Voltaire says, "that a ball weighing half a pound struck him in the right temple, making a hole large enough to admit three fingers;" and he adds in another place, "that the smallness of the hole in the hat is one of the reasons adduced by those who believe that he perished by assassination." Now the perforation in question is not more than half an inch in diameter, if so much, and certainly would have been more extensive from the passage of a large shot; as felt, unlike many other substances, does not partially reunite by elasticity. The evidence of Count Liewen, or rather his opinion, strongly corroborates the suspicion of foul play. He says, "I was in the camp before Fredericshal, and had the honour to

serve the king in quality of page on the night he was killed. I have no doubt he was assassinated. The night was extremely dark, and it was almost an impossibility that a ball from the fort could enter his head, at the distance and on the spot where he stood. I saw the king's body, and am certain that the wound on his temple was made by a pistol bullet. Who gave it is unknown. Sikar was suspected, because he was not with his Majesty previous to the blow, but appeared a moment after. Those who are used to military affairs know the report and noise which a cannon ball makes, but the report of the shot which destroyed the king was that of a piece close at hand, and entirely different."

As regards the rest of the clothes, they consist of a plain blue regimental coat of coarse cloth, faced with red, a broad buff leather belt, leather breeches, and a pair of most unwieldy square-toed jack-boots. The gloves are of fine leather; the left is perfectly unsoiled, but the right one is stained in the palm with blood, as is also that part of the belt by the hilt of the sword; so that it would appear that the king put his hand to his head on receiving the shot, before he attempted to draw his sword, which was the attitude in which he fell, as described by Voltaire. This effort at self-defence is also strongly corroborative of the suspicion of murder; inasmuch as it may be inferred that the king saw the hand which

dealt the blow, and fell in the last struggle to resent it. Well has Dr. Johnson recorded the event in the familiar lines: —

> "His fate was destined to a foreign strand,
> A petty fortress and a dubious hand;
> He left a name at which the world grew pale,
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

Bernadotte, the last of the list of sovereigns who rose to power through the effects of the French Revolution, has now been added to the illustrious dead within the same walls; and as deservedly fills a niche in the temple of history as those who preceded him. Called to a throne by a people to whom he was an alien, and against whom he had been in arms, he filled his high destiny with a moderation and singleness of purpose, unknown to the monarchs created by the nod of his late master on the wrecks of the dynasties he had destroyed. Thrust on unwilling nations amidst the convulsions which shook society to its centre, they preserved their ephemeral authority only during the season of violence and confusion, and fell as soon as the elements of social order began to reappear out of the chaos of despotism and usurpation; when exhausted Europe, with the renewed strength of an Antæus, rose in the fulness of its might to subdue the tyranny that had oppressed it, and to avenge the wrongs that had been perpetrated on the nations. But not so with

Charles John XIV. A simple soldier of the republic, but gifted with those powerful attributes which have full scope for their energies during periods of excitement and agitation, he rose rapidly to rank and fame, and fought the battles of the republic with a skill and ability, which placed him foremost among the celebrated marshals of the empire. A stern republican in his principles, he upheld the doctrines of his party as a member of the Jacobin Club to the close of its existence; and rather than relax one point of his tenets, even when, in the necessities of the state, distracted France beheld with joy the daring hand of Bonaparte pull down the tottering power of the directory and build the consular fabric on its ruins, he refused his aid, and laid the foundation of that jealousy which ever after existed between him and his imperial master; but when the dynasty of the latter seemed fixed, he never allowed those principles to interfere with his views of personal ambition. As Prince of Pontecorvo he accepted both rank and title, after having fought in the ranks to abolish such distinctions; and the entire change in the character of the man was consummated when the throne of Sweden was offered for his acceptance.

There is not, perhaps, to be found in the whole annals of history a more remarkable illustration of the secret object of democracy; the exhibition, namely, of that thirst for power and rule, which, predominating over every other feeling, seeks the

attainment of its purpose by the subversion of government and the peace of the land; and which, once attained, secures its acquisition by reigning with a tyranny unsurpassed by Eastern despotism. The career of Napoleon has exemplified this fact. Bernadotte, his elevation not being of his own creation, quietly discarded the principles which had been the polar star of his life, and passed over to the tenets of a constitutional monarchy. Faithful to the trust reposed in him, as an adopted son of that race, he sunk the recollections of the past and the ties of nationality (though not without compunction), and brought the exercise of his great military talents to bear against his former comrades at Dennewitz and Leipzic. The restoration of the Bourbons after the fall of Napoleon, which he had long foreseen, dissolved the dream of ambition he had formed, of ascending the vacant throne of France; and he retired to fill the more humble one which had been so unexpectedly placed in his power.

His peaceful reign was occupied in promoting the internal prosperity of his dominions; and to his management is to be attributed the healing of the bitterness and discontent experienced by the Norwegians, in being transferred from the sceptre of Denmark to that of Sweden. His popularity was undoubted; but he could not accommodate himself to the language of the country, and his love for retirement was increased by his objection to the least exposure to the climate in winter:

his southern constitution not being able to resist the rigours of the season, he kept himself a close prisoner in the palace during its long and dreary reign.

A small unpretending retreat, called Rosendal, at the outskirts of the city, was a favourite resort of the old king's during the summer months; and it was there I saw him. He was dressed *en bourgeois*, with a large cocked hat, edged with white feathers, which, unlike other sovereigns, he raised from his head to return a salute; his hair was white as snow, and his face and person particularly striking; tall and spare, the weight of eighty years did not seem to have affected his figure. A single outrider in plain livery, but wearing a most extraordinary hat ornamented with large ostrich feathers of red, blue, and yellow, was the only attendant on his carriage as he drove forth for an evening ride, and the few soldiers about the residence were on duty without arms; they beckoned me within the precincts, intimating, as well as I could understand them, that free access was permitted to the grounds. The simplicity of his life, so in accordance with the national character, and the absence of all state and military retinue, were the theme of praise among his subjects.

By his death the great northern bond—the evident aim of the Russian autocrat—has been strengthened by one link, the present Queen of Sweden being connected with his house by marriage. A similar alliance was also formed

with Denmark; but the recent death of the Grand Duchess Alexandrina, who was married to the heir presumptive of the throne of that kingdom, has to some extent broken the family chain, which would else have surrounded the Baltic, and converted it into a Russian lake.

The grand-daughter of the Empress Josephine is the present queen, a circumstance which makes the history of her ill-fated ancestor the more extraordinary. Raised from the middle class of society, and escaping from imprisonment and death in the Reign of Terror only by the fall of Robespierre, she passed to the glories of a throne, which she filled with a meteor-like brilliancy, and fell, leaving only a name for history to record; while the descendant of her more humble sphere participates in the inheritance of a crown, of which her children will perpetuate the dynasty. It surpasses even what is called the romance of real life.

There is another royal residence, called Dronningholm, at about five miles from the capital, on the banks of the Meler lake; but it has not been inhabited for some years. Its style is of the seventeenth century; the gardens are large, and laid out in the old French fashion. The stables are crowded close up to the main entrance of the building, and ruin the approach. Time has produced but few innovations in Sweden in two hundred years, and the character of the people has lost little of its primitiveness; so that the stamp of originality still remains. The various

collections of the queen of Adolphus still remain within the walls of the palace, as so many monuments of her refined taste and love of the arts, among a people who have never signalised themselves by any love or taste for the sciences.

To have produced one man, whose reputation has become the property of the universe, is their boast and pride to this day; and, as if to prove what the force of example of one great mind can effect, the love of botany among the Swedes is a ruling passion. The Linnæa borealis, a little creeping plant of delicious fragrance growing wild in the woods, and first discovered by Linnæus, and with which they have crowned his bust, is perfectly venerated. In one of my rambles in the country, some schoolboys who were following the same path, came running to me, stranger as I was, exclaiming—"See, sir, we have found some of the Linnæa borealis."

But to return to the palace:—the gems and medals are very beautiful, and there is a good collection of marbles, petrifactions, and natural curiosities, besides some very valuable antiquities from Herculaneum. The library is large, and contains some very rare works in the highest condition; some fine pictures by Rubens, Paul Veronese, and Rembrandt, adorn its walls. But amidst all these evidences of the cultivated mind and finished judgment, there is much of ancient barbarism to be found in the attempt at decoration and effect; the large and massive staircase, for

instance, has its walls daubed over by some village artist in distemper, to represent Italian gardens; alcoves, interior and exterior jumbled together, without perspective, and against all rules of art, like the singular productions of the Chinese. One remarkable picture, the size of life, representing a man in a sledge drawn by a rein-deer, is particularly pointed out by the custodian, as a work of historical interest. It is the portrait of a person, who having come to the knowledge of some dangerous conspiracy, drove his deer to the capital to lay the information before his sovereign; accomplishing the incredible distance of 800 miles in forty-eight hours. His beast dropped down dead on its arrival; but its master was ennobled for the service he had performed. The legend, which I think goes back to the year 1699, is doubtless exaggerated as to the details, but is correct in the main as regards the fact.

I have written at considerable length, as it is doubtful whether I shall remain here long enough to be able to avail myself of the next post; but under all circumstances I shall be in a condition to despatch a letter to you the moment I reach Gottenburg—my plan being to travel to that place by steam, through the Gotha Canal—and during the voyage I shall have abundance of time to continue the sketch of my perambulations about Stockholm.

LETTER XXII.

Inducements to visit Sweden. — Character of the Swedes. — Similarity of Swedish and Scotch Accent. — Laborious Occupation of the Women. — Andrew Bergland, the Valet-de-place. — Fine View of Stockholm. — The Park. — Market-people. — Fishing-boats. — Swedish Viands. — A Gale on the Wener Lake. — The Gotha Canal. — Falls of Trolhatten. — Salmon of the Lake and the River. — Scenery along the Canal. — Mr. Lloyd's Residence. — Gottenburg. — Russian Travellers.

I AM now on my way to Gottenburg, having somewhat curtailed my stay at Stockholm for the purpose of revisiting Copenhagen; for which place I shall embark at Gottenburg, and finally conclude my tour by taking the St. Petersburg steam-boat as it touches there on its way to London.

I regret that my time would not allow me to lengthen my sojourn at Stockholm, to study the habits and character of the people more than I have been enabled to do; and besides, I was anxious to reach Upsala and the mines at Dannamora: but they must now remain as inducements for another tour to these parts, so little visited and yet so full of interest. The fishing alone would repay the toils of the journey; and as for sport, there is not a moor in the Highlands that can boast the game with which this country abounds. To people of small incomes, and who

can find pleasures in the seclusion of a country residence, there is perhaps no country that offers similar advantages; as a slight instance of which, it occurred to me in stopping at a small peasant farm, while rambling in the interior, to ask for a draught of milk and a bit of bread, that I could not produce money small enough to meet the payment; and a twopence-halfpenny note was literally refused as being too excessive.

The Swedes are certainly an honest race, with high notions of rectitude and proper feeling, but falling off sadly as regards their morals; indeed, offences against them are not looked upon with censure or contumely. I think that every one who has visited the country must have remarked the extraordinary similarity that exists between the Swedish accent and that of the Scotch; I was absolutely startled when I first heard it, and could have fancied it a familiar dialect. The Swedes, like the Russians, are quick of comprehension, and supply the ignorance of their language with marvellous celerity; they are hospitable, courteous, and unostentatious. The elements of happiness in the country are abundant, and if the end be not attained, it must arise from a constitutional failing in the complaining party.

Labour of all kinds, and of undoubted severity, devolves much on the women; they toil at the oar, work in the fields, and fulfil all household duties. The same circumstance in France is

attributed to the necessity which arose from the great demand for men under the conscription, and the fearful loss of human life in the wars of Napoleon; habit, inherited by descent, may have established the custom here, for in all probability the waste of life during the Thirty Years' War, and the military spirit infused into the nation by Charles XII., threw the burthens of life on the women, from which they have never been relieved. The duties of the steam-boats, as regards the passengers, are all performed by women; who, whether young or old, are always called Flücke (girl), something in the same way that, however antiquated a post-boy may be with us, he never reaches manhood in that character—at least in name. Before I pass from this subject, let me recommend, as the prince of valets and faithful attendants, Andrew Bergland, whose services to me have been inappreciable, and who combines in himself every good quality without a fault. Poor fellow! few travellers gladden his eyes; and though his life is one of poverty and hardship, he is thankful, and abuses no confidence. He has insisted on my purchasing some rein-deer hams, which he pronounces to be *ganz vortrefflich.*

I have often noticed how instinctively people, on arriving in a strange town, hit upon the most favourite resorts, selecting the most advantageous points for a *coup d'œil* and the enjoyment of the most striking views, and there they retrace their

steps mechanically; thus, daily have I climbed an almost precipitous street, and as often, apologising for my intrusion, have renewed my request to the owner of a garden for permission to lounge an hour in his summer house, which commands a most delightful view, embracing in its range the outspread city, the Meler Lake, the island-studded Baltic, and a bold stretch into the interior. It has never yet been my fortune to visit the south of Europe, but I am satisfied that Stockholm, seen under the effects of a rich summer sun, will bear a comparison with the classic grounds of Italy as regards scenic effect. The thermometer stood at 84° in the shade while I was at Stockholm, with a resplendent sun, which threw its broad masses of light and shade on the landscape,—aids without which a paradise would be insipid.

The park, of which the Rosendal occupies a nook, is one of the most agreeable spots in the city, corresponding in some respects to the Champs Elysées of Paris; that is, with country houses, cafés, and places of amusement occupying its skirts, while the finely wooded, undulating expanse, is intersected with drives, lawns, and ornamental plantations; it is so little cramped by style and fanciful effects, that it seems like a beautiful bit of nature carefully attended to.

The public markets are always a source of amusement to me; I love to see the neat peasant

costume coquettishly arranged for the city gaze, and to speculate on the occupations and little domestic plans of the villagers, as they arrange their wares and produce in the most tempting forms; it is almost possible to read their character and histories as they push their little commerce. The Swedes are certainly industrious and intelligent, carrying on many little trades in their retired villages and the little sequestered islands, where they live shut out from the world, and only emerge in their little frail boats to dispose of their articles in the markets. Rough and singular as many of these objects naturally are, they please me by the rude attempt at ornaments, and by the ingenuity of native skill to contrive that which a finished workman accomplishes by rule and science.

Fish is naturally a great staple, and is brought alive in wells, contrived in the sterns of the boats. This gives the fishing boats a singular appearance when under sail, as the weight aft depresses that part of the boat to a level with the water, and raises the bows proportionably high. The fish, crowded in this small receptacle, would soon perish were the water not kept from stagnating by the agitation caused by the motion of the boat; and, therefore, when in harbour, they sling a large stone to the peak of the yard-arm, which, being swung perpetually to and fro, keeps up a constant undulating movement, and preserves the fish in

full vigour. Smoked salmon, brought by peasants from the interior, is in great abundance, and is a universal dish; but as it is put on table without undergoing any other process, I failed in my first attempt at deglutition. In fact, I believe it is a depraved appetite that can enjoy ham, herring, and salmon, in an uncooked and semi-raw state: and yet with the Northmen the epicurism is habitual. The sours and sweets of Germany are at first rather difficult to the palate, but the application of sugar to meat, and the profuse introduction of curds in Swedish cookery, are far more objectionable. Andrew Bergland had cautioned me as to the diet on board the steamers plying on the Gotha Canal, and advised me to lay in a little cabin store for myself; but as I am not very dainty, I refused all but a cake of portable soup, which in his simplicity and without saying any more than he had put it in the cabin, he had wrapped up in linen cloth: the intense heat still continuing, soon told upon the soup and fairly dissolved it. It would have been highly acceptable to me one night when we were short of provisions, with only a precarious chance of re-victualling on the morrow. It was on the Wener Lake (the largest in Europe after the Ladoga), an immense inland sea, into which we entered early in the morning, with a head wind, which, freshening as the day grew on, turned to a perfect gale before evening, with a high sea running. Our little

vessel struggled against it, shipping occasionally some heavy seas, and at last our captain deviated somewhat from his course and sought the lee of a small rocky island, where we lay at anchor all night, having accomplished only half our distance. We had not seen land all day, but the change in our course having brought us within a few miles of it, we pushed nearer in at daylight, and despatched a boat ashore to a little village for provisions, for we were clearly destined to spend another day in clearing the lake. The little steam-boats employed on this service are not quite adapted for the rough weather they must meet with on this lake and its sister the Wetter, and of which we had a sharp specimen, for to enable them to pass the multitude of locks with which this inland navigation abounds, they are built so extremely narrow, that they seem to be all length; but there is no danger, for they are commanded by able men, officers in the Swedish navy, whom the government urges into the employment to make them practical pilots of the intricate parts of the navigation, of which the canal is only the connecting medium.

The Gotha Canal assists in forming an inland navigation of 600 miles in extent, and is one of the most extraordinary works ever carried out. The scheme was proposed by Admiral Platen, who lived to see it nearly completed; and, as the most honourable tribute to his genius and enterprise, he is buried on the banks of the canal,

beneath a neat monument erected to his memory; out of respect for which every steam-boat in passing fires a salute of three guns. By means of this canal, the Sound dues are avoided, the stormy passage of the Baltic is saved, and the interior of the country is enriched by the facilities given to trade and the increased means of communication: these are the national benefits, and speak for themselves; but their importance cannot be justly appreciated without recollecting that this gigantic work has been carried out by a country of such small resources and limited means as Sweden.

At Wenerburg, where the Wener Lake terminates, and discharges itself by the Trolhatten Falls into the river Gotha, the descent, accomplished by means of locks succeeding each other in close proximity like steps, exceeds two hundred feet, cut through solid granite rock,—an Herculean labour; and as if enough had not been achieved, a second branch is now in the course of formation, to meet the increased navigation, and to save delay, by devoting one arm to vessels ascending, and the other to those descending. The operation occupies nearly three hours, which gives the passengers abundance of time to wander about the neighbourhood and to see the falls. They are both picturesque and grand; the perpendicular fall, perhaps, does not exceed twenty feet, but the rush afterwards is fearfully grand;

the waters dashing down the long descent, broken by huge fragments of rock, and divided within a hundred yards of the fall by one immense mass covered with fir trees (where no human foot has ever trod), and which they seem ready to tear from its base; and the deafening roar seems to realise the idea of a great convulsion of nature. High banks, or rather cliffs of granite rock, clothed with fir trees, rise from the water's edge, and by contracting the width of the torrent, add to the desperation of its course. The view of the brink of the fall is lost; for the daring and ingenuity of man have constructed on the very verge a succession of saw mills, whose continued labours are manifested by the hills of sawdust which have accumulated on the adjoining lands, the government having forbidden it to be cast into the stream, from its settling, and causing obstructions lower down in its course.

The adjacent country is hilly, wild, and highly picturesque; being covered with fine trees, which seem to grow out of the rock itself, so completely does the granite characterise the whole district. Salmon abound below the rapids, and the lake above is well stocked; but as no fish could ever arrive there from beneath, I am satisfied that it cannot be the *Salmo salar*, or common salmon, that is found there; and from a description which I endeavoured to gather from a peasant who had noticed the difference between the fish of the two

places, I suspect that the lake salmon is the *Thymallus vulgaris,* or grayling.

The general aspect of the country through which the canal passes is not fertile, as in places the surface is encumbered with blocks of granite; but where it is free it is cheerful, and shows that great industry is bestowed upon it. The little white cottages of the peasantry, with their dazzling red roofs peering through the trees, are beautiful objects in the landscape; but no towns, nor even considerable villages, are to be seen throughout the whole passage, until Wenerburg is reached; and the only indication of their existence is marked by an occasional spire rising in the distance. Below the Trolhatten Falls, the house of our countryman, the well-known 'northern sportsman Mr. Lloyd, stands facing the canal; the spot is well selected for his pursuits, in which he seems to have no rival.

It was evening as we reached Gottenburg, after a passage of eighty-four hours, pleasantly spent, and abounding in agreeable recollections.

By the recommendation of a fellow passenger I have taken up my quarters at an inn kept by a Scotchwoman, where I am in the enjoyment of every comfort; and by the kindness of the same party I have been introduced to the Merchants' Club, where, for the first time for many months, I have been able to refresh my eyes with the sight of an English newspaper.

Here I have parted with two Russians who have been my companions throughout from St. Petersburg; one is bound to Ostend, for the benefit of sea-bathing, and the other is on his way to England, being deputed by an agricultural society at Moscow to make some arrangements with our society in England. They were agreeable and talented men, full of military anecdote, for they had both seen service; and they improved daily as they got from home increased, till they were really frank and unreserved in their opinions and communications.

Gottenburg reminds me much of Dunkirk, but is, if possible, more dull. The business, particularly in deals and timber, is very extensive, and the people appear to be wealthy, happy, and hospitable, living on terms of good neighbourhood and sociability.

THE END.

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